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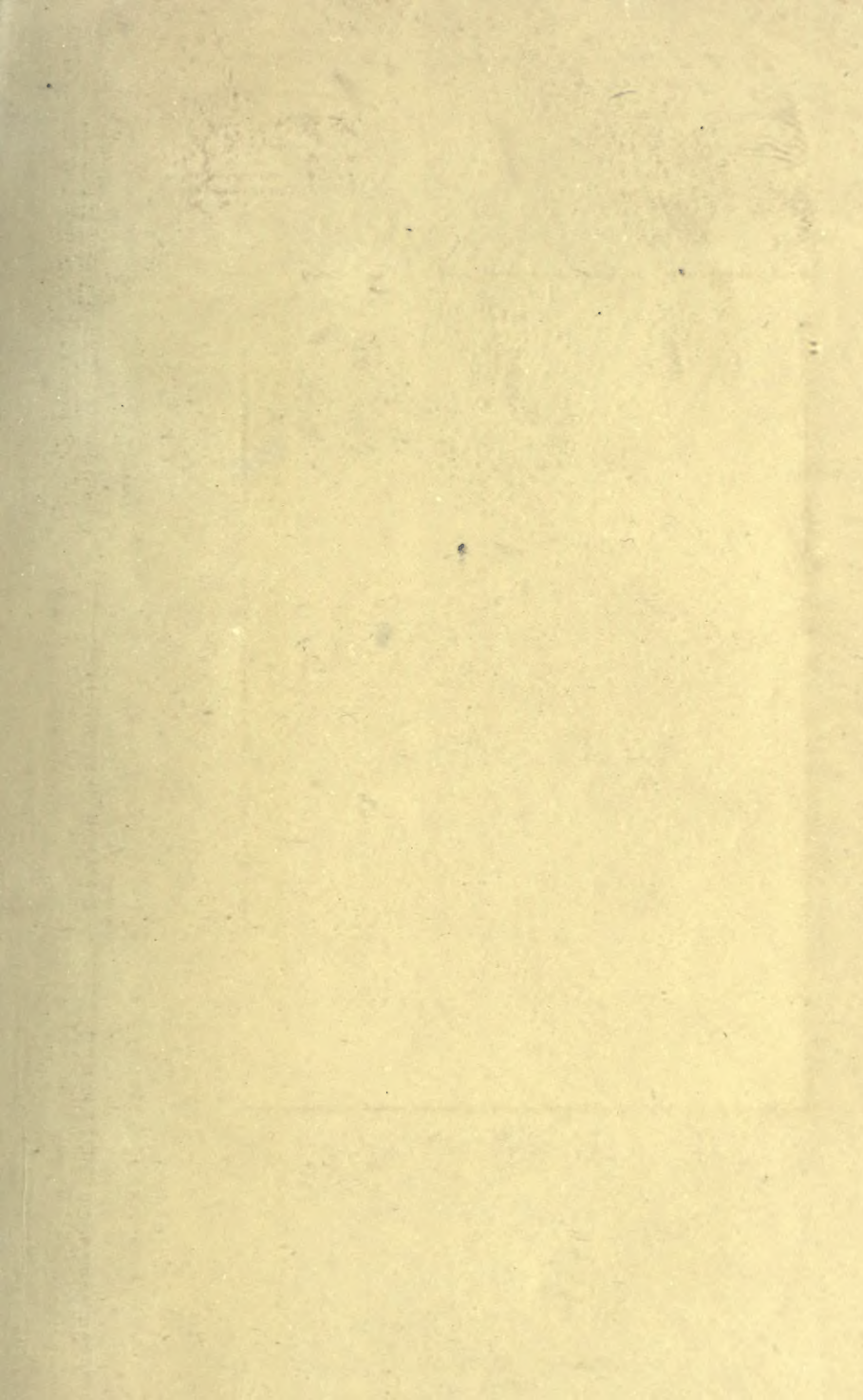
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SKETCHES
OF THE
HISTORICAL PAST OF ITALY.

SKETCHES

OF THE

HISTORICAL PAST OF ITALY:

FROM THE FALL OF THE ROMAN EMPIRE TO THE

EARLIEST REVIVAL OF LETTERS AND ARTS.

BY

MARGARET ALBANA MIGNATY.

Il vero certamente credo dire
Che fra le Donne voi siete sovrana,
E d'ogni grazia, e di virtù compita
Per cui morir d'amor mi saria vita.

Canzone di RE MANFREDI.

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TO
THE RIGHT HON. WILLIAM EWART GLADSTONE, M.P.,

THE ENLIGHTENED FRIEND OF
GREEK AND ITALIAN LITERATURE AND ART,
THE UNSWERVING CHAMPION OF CIVIL AND RELIGIOUS LIBERTY,

These pages are Dedicated,

BY KIND PERMISSION,
WITH ADMIRING AND GRATEFUL RESPECT,

BY
AN HELLENE.

P R E F A C E.

THE conjunction of the past with the present of Italy through the intervening Middle Ages, and the paramount influence exerted by that country over the civilization of Europe, must always strike the historical student with interest and with thoughtful curiosity.

It is our aim to unite the scattered and broken links of the great chain of circumstances which brought on that change in society we call "our own," and which, from the dissolving elements of heathendom, finally produced the revival of letters, science, and art, irradiating Italy with a glory unknown before.

The writer of these pages has been struck, amidst the voluminous mass of erudite and philosophical labours on the Dark and Middle Ages, with the want of a synthetic view of this subject, reduced to a compass accessible to the general reader—with the absence of a volume, in fact, in which the threads of the many stories of the several races which have struggled together in the Peninsula should be woven in one narrative, clearly showing the marked characteristics of all, and yet pointing out those common influences by which the harsher features of dissimilarity were fused, and thus fixing out the basis on which arose the Italy of our later times.

The writer diffidently begs to submit these pages to the public, in the hope of supplying, in some degree, this want. The theme has engrossed her own thoughts

for many years ; but its difficulty greatly added to her doubts of her own success in the execution of the task. It was not a subject to be undertaken with the same feelings which prompt a simple compilation. No one can approach the history of Italy with indifference ; the endearing charm of the country unconsciously casts its softer spell over the tragic and romantic, as well as the theological and literary annals of her story. Impartiality, however, has been constantly aimed at throughout. But the writer feels, and almost hopes to convey to the reader, the same interest and enthusiasm in her theme which makes her conscious that "feeling" sometimes animates even the calmest records of the past.

The mutual action of the Empire and the Papacy, which forms the great problem of the Middle Ages, and revived (not in fact, indeed, but in spirit, and under another name) even in our own times, has been carefully noted in all its phases.

Conscious of many deficiencies, the writer can but appeal to the forbearance of the public ; happy would she be, if she has succeeded in breathing into words the great and overpowering interest of her subject which she herself has felt.

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INTRODUCTORY.

IN studying the history of the human family at large, in order to determine its bearings and tendencies in the course of its moral and intellectual development, no circumstance more specially strikes the mind than the common solidarity of mankind from the remotest times with which we are acquainted to our present day.

Different peoples seem to work independently from each other, whilst still, however, an eternal tie of moral and religious sentiment, observable throughout humanity, brings all within a common bond of principles and ideas, which seem to form the natural tie of society at large.

Great nations have arisen and disappeared upon the face of the earth; leaving only such traces of their existence as have marked the course of some moral, political, or intellectual advancement of thought. The rest have disappeared; leaving behind them a name, a few sparse ruins, monuments buried in heaps of dust, within the bosom of time. Thus our survey of the course of society at large, reviewed from this broader field of inquiry, brings to the surface this solidarity of interest; and, as it were, the general law of compensation and progress which overrules the whole.

Far back as our knowledge can reach, in the early East, the cradle of knowledge and of religious and social polity, we find the notion of one "great incomprehensible God," whose divine essence is at times incarnated and incorporated with nature, and still always mysteriously speaking within the conscience and spirit of man, rising, like a luminous point, above the horizon of darkness and the incongruities of a Fetish worship.

This notion dawns forth, as in a morning of spiritual

light, in that wondrous land where man's mind is ravished into incommunicable rapture in the presence of the "Beautiful" to the comprehension of the "Sublime."

When the Aryan family moved from Bactriana to the south-east, to conquer the land of the Indus, they encountered severe obstacles, and had to fight sturdy battles against the rude Turanian tribes, who, seemingly, were already settled in the country. The poems of the Ramayana and Mahabarata convey a picture of those hard struggles and of their desultory life. The influence of the sacerdotal class, the transformations and metamorphoses of the "Great Being," first object of the Aryan worship, mark a change and deterioration from the grand primitive unity of conception to which the Vedas, composed in times long antecedent, point.

From the Vedas, or primitive hymns of the Aryans, a picture is afforded of the state of those races ere they descended from their original sojourn. Thence we have a perception of the superiority of their moral and religious sentiments, their respect for the family tie, and the self-governing polity of their patriarchal constitution. These principles gave them a superiority over the former inhabitants of the Dekan, composed virtually of inferior tribes.

Deterioration and depravation (still more, however, through many causes) still won upon them; until, three centuries before our own era, a man arose amongst them of princely caste, who from the heights of his spiritual conscience initiated a reform which has since been known as that of "Buddha." The sense of justice, the sentiment of human solidarity, which alone binds the family of man together, caused Buddha to break down the barriers of Hierotical tyranny, erected through the division of "castes," and to promulgate the doctrine of equality between man and man, founded on "moral qualities."

The emancipation of woman, through the right of religious ministration, was another forward step in the path of progress.

There is something terribly impressive in the notion

of the "Nirwana," however, or final rest of the soul (imagined by Buddha) after the continuous transmigration of the spirit in a future life. This notion of *annihilation*, to be enjoyed as the supreme rest, is suggestive of the previously hard-fought battles of life, of the dark and dreary encounters with suffering and degradation, until the final bourne is attained, not of celestial "light and joy," but of "forgetfulness" within the bosom of God.

The destiny of other branches of the same great Aryan family who wandered westwards from Bactriana into Europe in different migrations—the Celts, Slaves, Teutonians, and Pelasgi—more immediately concerns ourselves. They came in on borderland, where they had to contend with every difficulty. Their appearance on "historical ground" is therefore later, though their ultimate development is the highest which has yet been realised. Prior to others, the Pelasgi especially, divided afterwards into the Hellenic and other groups of families, brought about the civilization of the European world.

This great Pelasgian family first makes itself known prominently in the western world of Greece, where an early communication may be traced between them and the Phœnicians of Semitic origin. This Aryan group brought to existence a civilization of mixed character, partaking, however, of the best qualities of the whole human family, and more brilliant in intellectual attainments and artistical qualities than the whole world has ever since known.

This civilization was destined thenceforward to penetrate within the soil of humanity, and germinate throughout all time.

This same Western offshoot of the great Aryan family first mentioned is next to be met with in Rome, mixed with the Etruscans and Phœnicians, and blended with the Hellenic colonies which peopled Italy. To the Aryan branch of the human family also belonged those races of Europe—inhabitants of the far north—the admixture of whose blood with that of other peoples

(inhabitants of a more southern soil) brought about later other peculiarities in civilization, which are working their way in society even at this time.

Of the existence of the peoples inhabiting the continent of Europe prior to the descent of the Aryans we have but the faintest vestiges. The grand drama of history begins and is developed through the latter race, dominant everywhere above all others ; its chief focus of radiation in ancient times was Rome. Through the development of events in the course of history, Rome attracted within herself the "Hellenic civilization," which with time irrigated her whole plain of thought, as a torrent from an Alpine source. Literary culture, art, refinement in all that regarded the embellishment of life, all that is comprised in the expression of æsthetic grace, was the seal that Hellenic culture set on the literature and art of Rome and the world at large.

With a power of assimilation and of diffusion previously unknown, through the art of polity, in fact, Rome succeeded in concentrating within herself all the elements of the "ancient world," and of effecting the political organisation of many nations of mankind under "unity of rule."

But besides the Aryan and Pelasgic element, another great, nay, remarkable branch of the human family—the Semitic—was destined to find play within Rome, and to permeate through it especially, root and branch into the very depths of human society.

The Semitic peoples systematized a "moral and religious" polity, which has seemed to be their mission, and was certainly for a time nearly their sole scope of existence amongst mankind.

Adherent to a monotheistic faith in an "absolute living God," and to the traditions of their fathers, the Semites lived on the land bordering the Tigris and Euphrates, often conquered by other races, but still faithful throughout in their adherence to their ancient faith. Their principal development was evolved within the small compass of territory between the Tigris, the

Mediterranean and the Red Sea; they also existed in Abyssinia, and extended their colonies along the northern coast of Africa.

Distinct in many peculiarities from other nations; clinging to their creed and opinions with a tenacity of which no anterior example can be traced; firm in the sentiment of "family" and "tradition," distinguished for their respect for woman, as the companion and friend of man: the Semites seem actually to have been destined to carry out the weight of their convictions, and to develop the monotheistic idea among mankind. By these moral notions, and endowed, above all nations of antiquity, with the divine art of music (the most spiritual and ethereal in its essence and character, in its unutterable ravishment and approach to the sublime), the Semites became distinguished for these qualities, special to themselves. Else, holding themselves apart from the "Turanian" races, whom they avoided as impure (under the generic title of *Gentiles*), they never demonstrated talent for architecture, for painting, or for sculpture. They never erected an edifice worthy of fame. Neither at Jerusalem, Tyre, nor Sidon, nor yet at Carthage has any vestige of Semitic architecture worthy of the name of "art" been found. Painting and sculpture were, indeed, forbidden by their law, probably lest their cultivation might lead the people to "idolatry," and also because they were arts practised by the despised Gentiles. Religious sentiment, expressed in *lyric verse*, and in music, was the only channel of their genius, a channel which, however, has left an ineffaceable trace upon society at large.

Besides the one grand purpose to which the existence of the Jewish people was devoted, from the earliest records of history to the present time, commerce has been the great occupation and resource of the Semitic nations. Their genius in finance has never been equalled. In Asia and Africa, even at the present day, it is carried on by Arabs, and the monetary transactions of the world are practically managed by the descendants of

those people who were known as traders above a thousand years before the Christian era.

Such were the characteristics of the race predestined to give the future religion of the world. There was, however, a stiff-necked tenacity and narrowness of nature in this people ill-suited to the development of mankind; indeed, the ground whence the doctrines of the "new religion" arose had been fertilised by Hellenic thought through the Alexandrian school, representative of the learning, philosophy, and science of the Hellenes. The leading tenets of this philosophy had assimilated within the doctrines of certain Jewish sects, especially that of the Essenes.

Amongst them, in Galilee, was born the "Redeemer" and "Reformer" of mankind—in himself the ideal of humanity, of persevering virtue, gentle affection, and infinite love. His life, his doctrines, and his teaching combined in harmony. Faithful to the eternal aspirations for which he lived and suffered, abolishing "all differences of race and caste," Jesus of Nazareth brought into the religion of humanity a breadth embracing all mankind.

Through these elements the new law was evolved, a new society took its basis, to be developed through all time, because founded on principles based on the moral perfectibility of man.

These doctrines, ratified by the blood of martyrs, developed in the early Church, promulgated afterwards on a world-wide theatre, and organised into a *system* by Rome, gave birth to the institution of the "Universal Church."

Thus the spirit of the Hellenic, Semitic, and Roman civilization blended together, and formed an apex within Rome, whence afterwards, through the dark and the semi-light of the Middle Ages, they helped society in the acquisition of a new moral tone, which is even now being worked out. These three being the influences converging through Rome and Italy within our own civilization, it will be our task to note a few of its forward steps in the march of Time.

At the name and in the presence of the majesty of Rome we are seized with a mysterious admiration. The notion of Rome, the "Eternal," the Fated City, whence have been given the *judicial* and the *religious laws* of mankind, where the heroic virtues of an earlier civilization merged later into the depths of sin, folly, and crime, and were maintained on a besotted throne until, through rottenness and excess, the whole imperial fabric fell through by the hand of time—this great, and many-sided Rome strikes in a majestic light! Again later, through heaps of smoking ruins, amidst dissolution and destruction, we gaze upon Rome once more, re-erecting her pale brow, great mother of mankind, oracle of "Christian Unity," outstanding the ruin of a world!

This "mother of dead cities" harbours, in the course of history, barbarians within her bosom, and over them imposes her law. She rises on the human imagination as a dreamland of glory; future ages believe in her, worship and adore her, throughout consecutive generations. Her majesty forms the ideal dream of Pontiffs, Monarchs, and Poets, throughout time. Rome, as she stood in the past, with her twofold influence, remains to us even now, as the one living, indestructible "fact," erect amidst the ruins of time.

But first, let us look back to the period when the power and glory of Rome, concentrated as it was within the Empire of the Cæsars, first transcended in the imagination of peoples beyond the limits of fact, and became Ideal and Divine in the annals of thought and in the sentiment of mankind.

At the advent of Cæsar, when the astonished world saw the power of concentrated humanity gathered within his grasp, mankind, transcending the mere fact of intelligence, might, experience, knowledge, and intellectual genius, agreed, as moved by one unanimous impulse, in calling him "Divine."

In retracing the annals of peoples, we find at the beginning of every great epoch, the rising and working out of the new principles, or new ideal aspirations, as it were,

taking shape from a confused beginning or nucleus. These sentiments first grope their way in darkness, in the "vaticination" of peoples, and thence, in the form of dreams, prophecies, and auguries, they work themselves into the mind of man, nerving him, not unfrequently, to heroic actions, or goading him to crime, as the darkness or light elicited by the faith, or superstitious spirit of the hour, may act upon the impulses of man's inner life.

Before the rise of Cæsar (shortly before the advent of our Lord), the world seemed stricken with a general sense of discouragement. A desire for change, a longing for a moral stay, directly enjoined by the presence of a Deity, shaped itself in the mystic utterings of oracles, of seers, of prophets, augurs, and pythonesses, breathing the aspirations of the human family.

It may be said that mankind, wearied by the insufficiency of all dogmas yet known, and revolted by the absence of all nobler principles, and of the vile buffoonery which had taken the place of earlier forms of worship, looked to the altar of the "Unknown God," for the revelation of a higher and holier future.

No people at this time, however different their creed and tendency, whether they were derived from the north or from the south, but came forward with some special theory to satisfy the craving of the heart. A reign of peace and of plenty was foreshadowed throughout the pagan world, much about the time when the Messiah gave forth the first teachings of the new religion of peace and love.

The eagerness of mankind to worship a living Idol, however—an idol possessed of those outward qualities and power which command the general admiration of humanity—caused the notion of the divinity of Cæsar to be proclaimed on his advent to supreme power. It is thus that, even before the "Christian Ideal" became promulgated in after seasons, the divine attributes of Cæsar blending with the divine character of Rome, head and front of a political unity and Queen of the World, evoked the theory of the "Eternity of Rome."

The unity of government given to the human family by Rome prepared the way for the diffusion of the new principle of "Christian solidarity," which was, later, to establish the "Unity" of the entire "human family" in the new spiritual faith. It is thus that, through the gradual growth of various influences, the notion of the "Eternity of Rome" is dominant through mediæval times.

Rome, at the commencement of the fourth century, had reached the maximum of external adornment; no considerable change had been wrought in the appearance of the city for two successive centuries, when Constantine removed the seat of empire from Rome to Constantinople, at which time many of the chief wonders of art were removed from Rome for the decoration of the new capital, where many noble and patrician families transferred their residence.

Sixteen gates gave access to the Rome of the Cæsars; twenty-eight grand military roads ran forth from the city, and branched into endless diremptions throughout the various provinces of the empire. These roads, a marvel of structural solidity and excellence, were paved with polygonally-shaped slabs of basalt.

Their starting-point was the famous mile-stone Aureum Milliarium, erected by Augustus, at the foot of the capitol. Like arteries from a common centre, these roads were the medium for the transit of the traffic and civilisation of the world; by them Rome sent forth her armies, her decrees, and her laws. These wide and splendid roads bisected the Roman Campagna in every direction, and by their side stood a varied and interesting Necropolis, the City of the Dead, situated outside the City of the Living, and forming a counterpart of the former in various ways. Tombs of all sizes and of every form arose in the shape of temples, towers, pyramids, sarcophagi, or sepulchral urns; they crowded on the eye, and beyond them, the undulating curves of the green Campagna, interspersed with villas and splendid mansions, looked forth on a range of noble hills, and, surrounded by gardens

of costly magnificence, formed a worthy complement to the many wonders of Rome.

Fourteen magnificent aqueducts crossed the Campagna from the Sabine hills, conveying from these the pure and abundant water, for which Rome is still famous, into the hundred nympheums of the city. The baths of Diocletian alone afforded accommodation to two thousand four hundred bathers. Nor must the gardens of Sallust be forgotten in the enumeration of the beauties and pleasures of Rome. These gardens, situated in the direction of the Pincian Hill and Porta Salara, formed a sort of fabled ground of delight, bringing enjoyment to the senses and to the mind. Whilst from their heights a view of the surrounding country was commanded, they afforded a refuge from the heat in shady groves, adorned with lovely temples. Statues and circuses bordered the spacious avenues, affording every variety of amusement, as well as the charm of verdure and of clustering plants, and forming the choice retreat of the principal citizens of Rome, whilst beautiful fountains flowed with murmuring waters into shells of marble and bronze, and cooled the summer air.

Thus stood the gorgeous city, with its pantheon of religious creeds, the mart of all the splendours of the world, and fretted with marble and gold, till the vengeful hand of Christianity was brought to bear against her temples and fanes. The arch of Constantine closes the series of Roman monuments.

The work of destruction was soon to begin. The church of St. Peter was built with materials taken from the circus of Caligula and other edifices; but the work of dilapidation and transmutation was slow: long after the time described, Roman luxury and magnificence was still a bye-word and a show. Gradually the more marked external features of Pagan Rome were obliterated. A new Rome was built over the ruins of the ancient city. A new creed was grafted on society; and now again from Rome, the Eternal City, the Papacy extended its dominion, and spread its many-tangled web, "*urbi et orbi*," over the Christian world.

Through time, change, and transformation, soaring high in dominion over the spirit of mankind, in all ages, the name of the Imperial gold-crowned Queen of the Past, wreathed in eternal beauty, has reigned over all others, with almost divine attributes, in the mind of successive generations. Reviving nations looked back to her as a bright example; poets sang of her glories and sighed. Italy at all times aspired after the renewal of the Holy Roman Empire.

THE HISTORICAL PAST OF ITALY.

CHAPTER I.

Sketch of Ancient Imperial Rome.

IN order to appreciate the immediate action of Ancient Imperial Rome on the whole known world, the colossal extent of its subject territories, and some of its physical features, must, for a moment, be called to mind.

The Eternal City extended its dominion, not only on the great Caucasian range in Europe, but over the mixed races of Asia Minor, the Armenian group, and Egypt. It mastered several of the African races, and incorporated in its own the civilisation of Carthage.

Again, Spain with the Iberian populations, the Kimro-Gallic in Gaul, Britain, Illyria, Pannonia, and Thracia, were all in turn submitted to its action. All brought their various influences to bear upon its centre, forming together the strange colossus known under the appellation of Rome.

Rome represented at once unity, universality, and nationality. Temples in the course of time were erected to its worship. Poets and mankind at large regarded it as the head and fount of civilisation. A Gaulish poet of the fifth century, in retrospection of her greatness, exclaims :—

“Fecisti patriam diversis gentibus unam;
Profuit invitis, te dominante Capi;
Dumque affers victis patrii consortia juris,
Urbem fecisti quod prius orbis erat.”

But whilst on the one hand Rome centred within herself the halo of this earthly glory, she was indebted for art, polish, literature, and that culture which gives lustre to life, to the talents and genius of the Hellenes.

Whilst an insatiable craving for conquest and depredation, and the necessity of practising a policy adapted to effect the co-ordination of its subject-peoples into fitly-governed groups, caused the Romans to concentrate their attention on the art of governing mankind, the Hellenes, whose intuitive genius and knowledge of human nature had laid down the constitutional laws of society, failed in the application of these laws to the government of the peoples they conquered. This arose by reason of the contemptuous distance at which they held themselves from all nations alien to their own blood. The Hellenes were accustomed to style all other people *Barbarians* who did not belong to their country and peculiar race.

Even in the palmy days of Greece, when her undoubted superiority was demonstrated in arts and arms, and her conquests over the Oriental world dazzled mankind at large, even then she forbore with haughty disdain to assimilate the conquered peoples into an integral bond of union with herself. The "Hellenic" and "Barbarian" worlds were thus kept apart from each other. The profound individuality of the Hellenic spirit repudiated submission to a *national unity*, binding conquerors and conquered in one family tie. Proudly disdainful, and intellectually dominant over their Roman rivals, the later Hellenes (when the arms of Rome, victorious over Greece, had finally subdued her various provinces) still maintained their supremacy by the power of understanding, the strength of imagination, and the brilliancy of thought over the Roman conquerors. Their arts of culture, at first centred amongst themselves, were afterwards diffused at large through the Roman world, and formed the basis of that literary and artistical culture second to none in the world.

When first the intellectual development of the Hellenes was removed from Greece proper, it centred in Alexandria,

which city, since its foundation by the great conqueror who had bestowed his name on it, had become one of the marts of the world for wealth and learning.

Peopled by three hundred thousand freemen, and possibly as many slaves, commanding by its position the commerce of the Levant, it was from thence that the broad current of Athenian culture, tinged with an Oriental splendour, was communicated to the world.

Within the boundary of this great city, distinguished by the splendour of its decorative arts, the loose and licentious classes of society gathered to sport and display an elegance of costumes and life as yet unparalleled; but the learned, the studious, the refined literary sages of Greece and the Levant were attracted within its centre by the great library founded by the Ptolemies, which became the great focus of literary culture extant.

This library had suffered considerable damage after the campaign of Julius Cæsar against the Alexandrians. It was to some extent, however, restored by Anthony, who, unto the residue of the great library of Pergamos (which had been destroyed), added two hundred thousand volumes to its contents.

As though conscious that the future was to be indebted to them for its richest treasures of thought, cognisant of the importance of their language, rich beyond all others in power of expression, clinging to its beauty, and to their traditions, with almost an idolatrous pride, the Hellenes devoted themselves unceasingly to the custody of their literary treasures, for the Hellenic language and literature was the strongest national link that bound the Greek populations before they fell within the grasp of Rome, the one they ever afterwards clung to, throughout all ages, as their *natural bond*.

After the conquest, it continued to be the medium amongst the higher and intellectual classes for the expression of thought and the cultivation of literature, whilst it was used throughout the Levant for the transaction of commercial affairs.

The Latin language, being that of all official documents,

was obligatory on all concerned in the business of the state ; but even after the Roman conquest the Greeks retained their contemptuous disregard of other nations, who might subdue and govern them, but who could not easily approach their intellectual height.

On the advent of the new religion, the Hellenic language, modified by the Alexandrian intermixture, became the vehicle of religious teaching, controversy, and expression, and Constantinople, as the capital of the Eastern Empire, gave birth to this new phase of theological and literary culture, which, by keeping alive the olden language, has transmitted it, as a living tongue, even to our own times.

But to return to our considerations on the Roman Empire. The action of the Hellenic spirit on the culture of Rome was direct, and prepotential, as is acknowledged by the greatest writers of the times.

"No poor rill was it," exclaims Cicero, in an outpouring of enthusiastic admiration, in presence of the influence of the Hellenic culture on the language and literature of Rome. "It was no poor rivulet," he says, "but a broad and majestic river, which flowed within our territory, irrigating the whole breadth of the country with its fertilising power."¹

"Half Greeks themselves," says Suetonius, "the most ancient of our sages, poets, orators, etc., were merely the interpreters of the learning of the Hellenes."

Rome borrowed her themes of composition, her theories on art, her standard of measure, the meter, from the learning and genius of the Hellenes ; and from them she learnt the refinement and polish of her own (at first) ruder language.

Livius Andronicus and Ennius Pacuvius were Greeks from the south of Italy. From the Hellenic culture they borrowed their knowledge in every important province of culture and refinement ; they were the masters of

¹ *Influxit enim non tenuis quidam e Græcia rivulus in hanc urbem, sed abundantissimus amnis. Cicero, De Republ. II., 19. See "Tableau de l'Empire Romain," Amédée Thierry, page 203.*

Latium in grammar, history, poetry, and art. Indeed, so little ductile in nature were the Romans that even during the palmy days of their "literary" greatness their men of genius were importations from the neighbouring provinces. In truth, a long preparatory work was required, and a direct discipline from the schools of Greece, before the language and literature of Latium could reach its maximum of lustre.

The last years of Republican Rome, however (after the preparatory foundation had been laid), furnished a rich quota of celebrated men from Southern and Central Italy. Lucretius, Cicero, Sallust, Cæsar, Varro, and others adorned the Latin literature with the fruits of their talents and genius, deeply imbued as they were with the knowledge and learning of the Hellenes.

But this concentration of literary culture in Rome lasted but a short time. Ere long the centre of literary excellence seemed to move from Central to Northern Italy, where, far removed from the stormy atmosphere of the great capital of the world, leisure was found for the cultivation of thought, in the comparative peace and retirement of those beautiful cities which gem, like a coronet of pearls, the brow of Italy, and which have never yet obtained, from student or from artist, that critical and minute attention their varied treasures of history, song, legend, and art would so richly repay.

A host of highly educated men came from Rome to enjoy a studious life, apart from the turbulence of agitated passions, in those cities where excellent and superior knowledge was to be obtained. At Cremona and Milan, especially, many men of celebrity were educated. We may instance Virgil, who was a native of Mantua; Livy, who was born at Padua; Vitruvius at Verona; Cornelius Nepos at Hostilia, and Catullus from Sirmio on the Lake of Benacus. The grace and sweetness of the last seem clearly to reflect the splendid scenery which early met his eye.

The outward appearance of the great Roman capital, long the brilliant and splendid centre of a world-wide

influence, merits our momentary attention, as its image has come down to posterity as a wonder of the past.

Forty years before the ingress of Honorius¹ (A.D. 362), the city of Rome had reached the maximum of grandeur; the arch of Constantine, and works of minor importance only, were subsequently added to its embellishment. Its growth and splendour had steadily increased from the time of Augustus to that of Agrippa.

The city was divided into fourteen regions; the last of which was separated from the rest by the Tiber. Every style of architecture figured within its walls. The fabled wonders of ancient Babylon, Assyrian gorgeousness, Hellenic taste, Roman solidity, were blended, or glittered forth in gilded splendour. Forums and temples, adorned with deep shady porticoes, and enriched with statuary, busts, and mosaics, were met with at every turn, in bewildering profusion. Rising like a varied landscape of edifices, "the seven-hilled city's pride" was backed by the azure of a matchless sky, was surrounded by the verdure of pleasant groves, and fronted by a marvellous amphitheatre of hills. It was like a vision of architectural beauty seen in a dream, in which tower and temple, basilica and forum crowd on the eye, and the bystander feels lost in a forest of volutes, columns, arches, and wonders in every form.

The circumference of the city walls, strengthened at intervals by superb towers and bastions, extended twenty-two miles. About one million four hundred thousand citizens (of which four hundred thousand were unemployed) inhabited this city; the converging point of the most dissimilar interests. The unemployed part of the population—idle, turbulent, insatiable after amusement—prowled about the city, lurked in the streets and by-ways, lounged in the nympheums, craved perpetually for food, and formed the best spectators of the scenes of carnage enacted in the Flavian Amphitheatre. These idlers formed the indomitable, fluctuating, dangerous

¹ Honorius entered Rome, A.D. 402.

plebeian crowd of Rome—the flaw and the pestilence of the ancient world.

Rome was indeed the city of contrasts. The gorgeous apparel worn by the ladies and youths, the “*jeunesse dorée*” of the epoch, the robes of purple and gold, and the transparent lawns, got up with wondrous flutings on their borders, the chains, necklaces, and ornaments worn by the great and fashionable, jostled a squalid and ignoble crowd—the low population of Rome. This strange crowd filled the streets by day with insolent clamour, and lurked at night (wrapped in some mean garment) under sheltering arches or lengthened porticoes, waiting in the impunity of darkness for opportunity to commit every nameless crime!

Over¹ this great slumbering sea of human beings was spread a veil of general darkness, only lighted occasionally by the torch-bearers of some belated patrician on his return home from a late festival. But the streets at those hours were encumbered by all the rustic vehicles, of osier and of wood, employed in conveying the provisions of the city from the surrounding country, this rural traffic being prohibited during the day to prevent the complete choking up of the narrow, tortuous ways.

The shouts and quarrels of the waggoners, the lowing of oxen, and the braying of donkeys resounded throughout the night, sharpening the contrast between the still beauty of the latter, when enjoyed in the delicious gardens and retreats of the wealthy.

Huge timber erections, of four stories in height, but inartificially constructed, were also annexed to the palaces of the great, and served as the refuge of a nameless multitude, crowded in their airless dens without distinction of age or sex.

A glance at Rome in the sunshine appealed irresistibly to the least fervent fancy. On one side arose the Quirinal, Viminal, Esquiline, and Cœlian hills, crowned and crowded with the wondrous structures of which a

¹ See Friedlaender. *Mœurs Romaines du Règne d'Auguste à la fin des Antonines.*

few faint traces may yet be seen. These rose against the deep blue sky, branching off from a common centre.

The central vertebra¹ of the city was formed by the Aventine and Capitoline hills; on the latter the famous Temple to Jupiter (first dedicated to that Deity by Numa) displayed the glories of its golden roof and Corinthian columns, harmonising in magnificence with the adjacent forum. Its mighty gates of gilded bronze were peculiar in their wealth of decorative beauty.

The castellated palace of the Cæsars, vast in extent, and also covered with a gilded roof, stood near. On this great palace had been lavished every resource of art, in statuary, in mosaic,² in intarsie, and in carving. Under the Palatine rose the vast Circus Maximus, where games were publicly celebrated in honour of the Gods; beyond that the wondrous Coliseum raised its gigantic crest.

In this vast area Philip had celebrated the Millennium or thousandth anniversary of the existence of Rome, and it had been recently restored (at the period of which we treat) from the damages it had received from lightning.

Rising in four tiers of arches, studded with statues, affording accommodation to eighty-seven thousand spectators, the Coliseum might alone have been the wonder of Rome!

Further, and away by the banks of the Tiber, ran the great Flaminian Way, the Via Lata, decorated with stately palaces and triumphal arches, as far as the Campus Martius, where the military manœuvres of the army invariably attracted a vast throng.

In the centre and heart of the city places of public amusement abounded on every side. The Flaminian Circus, Pompey's Theatre, the Theatre of Marcellus, were at hand, close to the Capitol. Different in style, but stately in architectural bearing, rose, in quite another direction, the vast circular dome of the Pantheon.

In every direction, the number of temples, pillars,

¹ See Gregorovius. *Geschichte der Stadt Rom*.

² Even now its remains, lately excavated, startle us with the scientific and technical beauty of the "details" still extant.

porticoes, and thermæ which met the eye in Rome was bewildering.

The forums were counted by hundreds, and the finest were known by the names of Cæsar, Augustus, Nerva, Domitian, and Trajan (where the famous column known by his name stands to this day).

The monuments of Rome were distinguished by a massive solidity, expressive of wealth and might. Such were those dedicated to the Antonines, the column of Marcus Aurelius, the famous Stadium of Domitian, the Mausoleum of Augustus, the Sepulchre of the Emperors; and, on the other side of the Tiber, the vast round tower, the Tomb of Hadrian, now Forte Sant' Angelo, witness to many historic tragedies throughout more modern times.

Of the great ancient Roman temples, that dedicated to Venus and Rome was amongst the finest; the architecture was Corinthian, and the size colossal. The roof was gilt, and amongst other wonders of art, it contained the colossal statue of Nero, by Zendodorus.

One of the chief luxuries of Rome was the excellence and abundance of the waters, which magnificent aqueducts conveyed into the city. Perpetual streams flowed from nympheums and fountains, and fed innumerable thermal establishments; the latter (the resort of the idle and luxurious) were replete with every luxury of marble, mosaic, bronze, ivory, gems, and the precious metals. The most celebrated among these were perhaps the Thermæ of Titus, of Constantine, of Caracalla, and those of Diocletian on the Viminal. The latter were principally erected by "slave labour," thousands of unfortunate Christians having been condemned to the task. These vast thermæ branched out in a variety of directions, and were marvels of extent and of taste.

There was, besides all this, and just outside the city of Rome, along the famous Appian Way, a mighty "City of the Dead," outside and near to the "City of the Living." And again, on the outskirts of the town, there were vast pleasure-grounds and gardens,

bedecked with splendid villas, the resort of the wealthy and great.

Nothing, in a word, was wanting to make the city famous and attractive beyond all others. It remained without a rival, until the transfer of the "capital" to Byzantium (as the seat of empire) deprived it of its most splendid works of art and vertu.

From the above rapid sketch a faint notion may be received of Rome's outward appearance at the moment when her influence predominated over society at large.

In after times, and during the *middle ages*, the reminiscence of this colossal might and influence burnt itself into the mind of mankind, and became a "*beacon light*" for the guidance of future emperors and kings—a theme for poetry and song.

CHAPTER II.

The Action of Rome on the Provinces—Causes of her Decay and Fall
—St. Augustine compiles the theory of Rome's Eternal Greatness,
and foreshadows the mediæval version of *Universal History*.

PERHAPS no subject in history more forcibly rivets attention than the downfall of Rome.

Its headlong march from supremacy to dejection, the surprising fact of the fall of a Colossus, of seemingly incalculable strength, at the hands of enemies in every way inferior to it in numbers, forces, and power, might seem incredible, did not the concurring testimony of historians bring certainty to the facts.

Amongst the causes which most contributed to the general debility of the Empire seems indubitably to have been the state of depression in which the once flourishing provinces were involved. This was especially the case in regard to the Municipiæ, whose importance had gradually dwindled from splendour to decay, in sequence to the deterioration in the moral character and position of the middle class, which, during the height of the Empire of Rome's glory, may be said, like the sinews of a nation, to have governed the municipal affairs, and through these to have supported the nation at large.

This class, after passing successively through every stage of prosperity, and having been honoured as the guardian of the highest moral duties of the civic and judicial functions, was brought low by the deteriorating action of Imperial Rome.

Many causes contributed to this deterioration. The corruption of society, and the change which the Christian religion wrought upon it, were amongst the most important. Through their varied action the middle class sank gradually in public estimation until every trace of public virtue disappeared from it; and the Barbarians,

in conquering the Roman provinces, conquered seemingly a *dead nation*, where the only semblance of life was in the spirit of the higher clergy, and in a few faithful followers, who lived for a Kingdom which was not of this world.

These same Barbarians, when they entered into possession of the provinces, found on one hand a mutinous and undisciplined army, and on the other a degraded and idle populace, swarming in every purlieu, and sapping the very resources of society; a rabble of utterly vile civil functionaries, elected at the caprice of the Imperial master—tools of his interests, and enjoying, at his pleasure, the highest and most honourable posts. The action of Rome on the Municipiæ, and the reaction of the latter on Rome, had been characterised during the course of ages by a varied ebb and flow, the first phase of which is included in the first century of the Empire; the second is marked by the introduction of Christianity into its centre (as the religious creed of the realm), and commences under Constantine. The third and last phase is marked by the fall of the Western Empire.¹

It will be remembered that, in the development of a politic system of colonisation, the grant of municipal freedom had been made by Rome to many of her important provinces, especially in Italy. Rome had, in the course of time, extended the right of citizenship from the dwellers in the city of Rome only to all her subjects. This extension of the franchise to the citizens of the provinces, which entitled them to share in the coveted rights of a small number, had produced throughout the independent provinces a body of men who, when entrusted with the high judicial forms of government, and empowered to maintain order and to promote the local interests of their several cities, had proved in every way worthy of their high position.

The right to exercise self-government in the civil affairs of the provinces created a class of men called the "Decu-

¹ In the Eastern Empire, the municipal rule was finally cancelled by Leo the Philosopher, A.D. 886.

rioral body," composed of men drawn from the middle class of free citizens. These were chosen amongst such as possessed a modicum of personal property—even a few acres of land. All such possessed the right to vote, to be elected on the Decurional roll, to whom the civil and judicial administration appertained.

When Rome ceased to be the centre of attraction as representative of the political interests of the Empire, the provinces began to develop a flourishing local existence. Many of the chief cities became crowded with important and magnificent buildings; palaces, circuses, baths, and aqueducts, built after the manner of Rome, with numberless schools and colleges, arose, encouraged and supported by the Municipiæ. These cities enjoyed all the elegance of refined life, and produced a body of active, useful, and intelligent citizens, who looked to the fulfilment of their public duties as their highest and most important object in life.

Even after the privilege of voting in the Comitæ had been abolished, and when all political action had been absorbed by Rome, the provinces continued to flourish; for some time they were lightly taxed and largely benefited. The mother city had immense resources in her treasuries from the plunder of conquered nations; and Nerva, Diocletian, and Trajan respected the Decurional body, allowed it uncontrolled enjoyment of its ancient privileges, and granted to the provinces the full right of inheritance on free and on mortgaged property.

To the practical knowledge and wisdom of the Decurional body we owe, in a great measure, the wonderful compilation known as the Code of Roman Law. It was elaborated through the united sense and judgment of these judicial functionaries of the middle class. No code has more powerfully affected the destinies of mankind, in all that regards their private lives and fortunes. It has been modified, but not abrogated, even now, over a great portion of the surface of the earth; its influence is clearly perceptible over the civil code of France of the year 1793, and in the modification of the latter, called the "Code

Napoléon," it is still more significantly traced, in the subjection to parental authority of sons of even mature years.

But whilst the duties of the Decurional body were in the highest degree honourable, they were utterly unremunerative. So long as the provinces commanded their own resources, this state of self-sacrifice was bearable, but when the Municipiæ became, at a later date, defrauded of their revenues by the inexorable fiscal exactions of Rome, it became intolerable, for reasons to be afterwards explained.

Meanwhile, the law of franchisement granted to the Roman world had wrought a transformation within society. The boundary lines of "class" had been broken down at the Emperor's pleasure. The ranks of the senate, once reserved to the proud aristocracy of Rome, had been opened to encroachments from the provinces. Men of all ranks, not excluding "Liberti," or freedmen, were raised, by Imperial will merely, to seats amongst that chosen body.

Through privilege, caprice, or favour, too often by bribery, men drawn from the lowest ranks of the population were raised at the command of the Emperor to the highest posts of honour; whilst the idle, ravenous, and degraded multitude became every day more dangerous, separated, as it were, by an abyss from the wealthy and powerful favourites of the day.

The army, corrupt and overbearing, was no longer swayed by the lofty principles of honour, obedience, and patriotism which had once chained victory to the eagles. Interest and booty were its ruling gods; it was pampered, caressed, and dreaded.

The Prætorian Bands frequently decided Imperial destinies. None of these social elements commanded respect. The Roman world began to feel that besides the social tie that bound its provinces, a moral one, a sentiment of a common nationality, was wanted—a tie that should bind all men in one common belief and under one code of obligations. The world was ripe for the

acceptation of the lowly and sublime faith of a "common brotherhood" in Christ. Men, criminal and dissatisfied, but not callous to their own degradation, found comfort and sustenance in messages of "peace and pardon." It opened the portals, too, of a higher sphere, where grace and love and peace succeeded to misery, to sin, to strife. In its earliest days the Christian brotherhood had no earthly arms, but the missionaries fought with weapons from another world, in which distinctions of rank were unknown. A Christian convert became at once, therefore, free; the fetters of earthly slavery seemed lightened; he was the co-heir with the mightiest patrician in the promises of the Kingdom of God.

The Christian brethren formed a compact body, governed by their own elders, and by the hierarchical clergy. They enforced their own rites and laws, tenets and customs. Their interests and lives were sacred, and apart from the rest of mankind.

For the most part, the elders, deacons, and clergy, who ruled the early church, were men of holy, harmless, and edifying lives; winning by these high qualities the unquestioning obedience and reverential confidence of their flocks. It was believed that to them was given the power of granting life after death, happy or miserable, as they bound or loosed the sins of man. The fear of eternal punishment naturally showed itself in attempts to propitiate by gifts the ministers of the death-bed. A great share of the personal property of believers thus fell into the hands of the clergy, which served for the erection of churches, and other pious purposes.

The ecclesiastics presided, from the cradle to the grave, over all the varying destinies of man. Schools were founded, meetings and associations were instituted for the teaching of or commenting on the Christian doctrines.

At first, this great social movement had been almost secret: it was persecuted by the learned and orthodox Hebrews. It was attractive to simple and despised multitudes; it was the practical rehabilitation of man—the secret longing of every assembly or class of men, however

degraded it may be. But the influence of the new society increased rapidly after the first century. It continued to harmonise more with existing usages; it adopted and incorporated, under other names, almost all the ancient festivals and traditions dear to the mass of mankind; it opened the doors of the convent to the gloomy and to the criminal; it assimilated itself imperceptibly to the ways of common men; the path to purity and perfection was pointed out; but the harsher commands of the earlier Apostles were superseded by the force of circumstances no man has yet been able to control.

The circus and theatre were disused by degrees. The church monopolised at once the religious rites and the civil life of man. The conversion of Constantine marked the official turning-point between the old and the new beliefs. Christianity was proclaimed the religion of the State, and cities were divided at the same period into dioceses and parochial districts, governed by special canons, entitled to fixed contributions from the faithful, subject to laws and possessing privileges apart and separate from the rest of society.

True, in spite of the new doctrine, long ages of fearful and terrific darkness were to ensue ere the benighted spirit of man could follow the Great Teacher in the path of a moral reform. There, where decay was so far advanced, the renewal of the inner life and the awakening of the moral and independent conscience could not be expected. Under the mantle of Christianity, human passions were found to rage fiercely still; the purity of the Christian teaching was almost lost under a mass of corrupt, and sometimes loathsome, superstitions; but in the darkest hours grace and power were never wholly wanting, and inspiration was never withdrawn from the chosen vessels of the Lord; and, in spite of many shortcomings, these teachers of the Christian congregation won an influence which could only be ascribed to the highest and most sacred order of gifts.

Whilst the Christian diocese and parish were rising supreme over the Municipiæ, several other destructive

causes were sapping the foundation of the olden society, and forecasting its total decay.

In addition to the arbitrary and insatiable drain on the resources of the provinces at the mere caprice of the Imperial will, there were three paramount sources of perpetual disquiet to the government, and each demanding an immense expenditure.

First, and most formidable, was the insatiable, lazy, reckless, and savage populace of Rome, and of the great cities, demanding food and amusement, with threats of fire and assassination if refused. Next was the army, swarming with mercenaries of doubtful faith, and ever menacing civil war. This army was even more necessary to repress the Barbarians perpetually hovering on the outskirts of the Empire, allured by hopes of plunder, and themselves also pressed on by fresh tribes, still more savage, in the rear. To these inevitable sources of disquiet and of boundless expenditure were added the swarm of civil functionaries, who, like a plague of locusts, spread over the entire Empire, solely with a view of amassing, by every fraud and violence, treasure for the government and wealth for themselves; and through them new and grievous taxes were laid on real and on mortgaged property.

The class most humiliated and injured by these exactions was naturally the Decurional, who found themselves compelled to exercise gratuitously harsh and thankless offices, whilst their property was at the mercy of the government officers.

At the commencement of this state of municipal depression many members of the Municipiæ sought and obtained exemption from such onerous burdens (as their once honourable duties had become), under the pretence of joining the Christian brotherhood. Men of all ranks found employment as clerks of a dignified and not servile nature in these Christian bands. Much, however, as the new doctrines were encouraged, it was found necessary to put a sudden and peremptory stop to the abandonment of the Decurional duties—else the city's

interests would have remained uncareed for ; no other save the Decurional body, and that by stringent laws only, being found to perform odious and unrewarded duties. These they were bound to, until the hour of death. In vain the poor victims of this official tyranny endeavoured to elude the law by seeking refuge in flight; they were tracked mercilessly out from their momentary hiding-places, and forced once more to resume their distasteful avocations !

Whilst every circumstance thus contributed to lower the consideration of the Decurions, and to bring their class into contempt, every circumstance, on the other hand, contributed to forward the elevation of the clergy into a firmly constituted body of increasing wealth and power.

At the time alluded to society was made up of three classes. To the first, or higher class, belonged by right all such as might be elevated to it at the Emperor's pleasure or decree. It was a vast and extensive class, including the Senate, the clergy, the army ; the many who through imperial mandate were entitled to the appellation of "Clarissimi ;" the official dignitaries of the Palace and Court ; the Imperial body-guard, the Barbarian auxiliaries, and the many officials charged with the executive functions of the government and police.

The second class we are already acquainted with. It was drawn solely from the respectable middle class of citizens, such as possessed a certain number of acres of free landed property. These men, either of indigenous birth, or naturalised settlers on the soil, administrators of their own and city's interests, bounden slaves to their Decurional duties, lived and died in the discharge of these administrative functions. Their posts were not transferable, and their heirs inherited their duties, uncheered by a hope of preferment or of amelioration of their condition.

Last of all in the social scale, but privileged above the Decurional class, was the third or plebeian ; whence

however, individuals were not unfrequently drawn, at the will of the Emperor, to be raised to the Senate, and to share the honours of the highest class. Persons thus distinguished, as well as "Liberti," or freedmen, were often favoured with the loftiest Court patronage and privileges of every sort.

It naturally results, from what has before been stated, that within this vast decaying world only one body of men retained within itself elements fitted to found a new state of society, and that body was the *Christian clergy*.

When the Western Empire, sapped to its foundations by these many causes, which have been described, fell into the hands of the Barbarians, they found decrepitude and want of any faith in universal principle, save in the Christian priesthood.

The Church rose amidst the ruins of all around it, as the Ark outrode the Deluge. The authority of a divine mission, the faith in tradition, the consolations it afforded by the proclaiming of an "eternal home," in the ruin of the "earthly ones" in the Empire, the purity of its morals, gave it a powerful and lasting influence over the Barbarians, who abhorred the corruptions of Pagan Rome.

Thus the Church rose supreme at this time, and represented the new *bond of unity* and the spiritual home of mankind.

It is with no surprise, therefore, that we find the clergy so often charged with the offices of the civil government of the people, whilst the military commands of the cities and strongholds were held by the new masters, who had wrenched the sceptre from powerless and unresisting hands. And when we reflect on the importance of Rome to the ancient world, we shall hardly marvel at the rapidly extending power accorded with time to the "Bishop of Rome." If we, then, consider that the same high functionary was a civil governor as well as a spiritual director of the flock, we shall not wonder at finding the election of this important personage to have

been regarded as a matter of vital interest by the community at large.

Thus was gradually initiated that great transformation which has been the marvel of the world.

It required, however, the long elaboration of the Dark and Middle Ages to teach the stiff-necked multitudes the true appreciation of the high spiritual and moral characters of the new law, and to make out of the old and pagan world a new and Christian society, working upon solid principles, and following fundamental duties, in lieu of blind impulse, superstitious enthusiasm, and faith obscured by the intricacies of an involved and arbitrary dogma. This faith, transformed by Rome into a tyrannous absolutism, placed a yoke on the neck of mankind, in substitution to the laws of a refined reason and a pure, clear morality, such as emerge from a more just interpretation of the doctrines of the Christian faith.

Side by side with this powerful moral influence exercised by the clergy, and especially by the Bishops of Rome, over their congregations, there penetrated within the creed of the Roman Catholic Church certain abstract theories which had been slowly forming in the mind of Christianity. To these theories the great St. Augustine gave definite fashion and form.

Struck with the grandeur of the past of Rome, and with the loftier grandeur still of the Christian spiritual ideal, against which he was persuaded the "gates of darkness and death might not prevail," looking back on the past, reviewing the present, and penetrating the future with prophetic faith, he saw foreshadowed the theory of Rome's eternal greatness throughout all time, and found the completest formula of that belief which the Catholic Church has accepted as an almost unquestioned truth.

No one was fitted more than himself for this gigantic task. With a brilliant intelligence, versed in Græco-Latin literature and philosophy, ardent in temperament as the climate of his native Carthage, son of a Greek

Christian mother, whose passionate attachment to the new faith sank deeply in his mind, he, after the first ebullitions and irregularities of youth had given place to a moral re-integration which changed the essence of his being, set to work with the zeal of a convert to elucidate the inner workings of the spirit in a state of holiness, condensing his views of religion and philosophy in his great work "The City of God."

The fundamental notion was the action of Rome on the past as the nucleus of a "political unity," and its action on the future through "spiritual faith" in Christ. Preparatory to this, the "political unity" had, by fusing nations together under the influence of one common ruler, prepared the sentiment of mankind for the reception of the new and divine dispensation.

This dispensation, founded on the fraternity of all mankind, irrespective of condition and creed, transcended in spiritual beauty and in philosophical grandeur every previously known fact.

He observed how the majesty and the strength of Rome had overawed every other feeling, and thrown into the shade every other consideration, filling the minds of conquered nations with wonder and with reverence. Jews and Gentiles under the Roman Empire gloried in the title of "Roman citizen," and felt an equal pride in the glory of Rome. Even Christian martyrs, chastised and persecuted by the Cæsars, had prayed for the preservation of Rome and for the health of the Emperor.

Rome, as the "representative city," was endeared to the world at large. In Rome the "religious unity" would follow the steps of the "imperial unity" of the past. The temporal greatness and peace foreshadowed in older Rome would be followed by the loftier greatness and the deeper peace of the "eternity of holiness" promised by the Messiah to his kingdom in his Church.

The guides and pastors, rulers of this fraternity, were held by St. Augustine to be entrusted with the task of regenerating their flocks. They held on to the traditions of the past, and were penetrated with its knowledge and

the power of the Holy Spirit, according to the express declarations of the Saviour. The inspirations formerly vouchsafed to the Hebrew prophets—and which the obstinate and stiff-necked rebellion of the once favoured people had caused to be withdrawn for a long dark period of suffering and humiliation—had been again revealed at Jerusalem in the awful and significant miracle of the Pentecost, amidst rushing blasts and the descent of fiery tongues. These revelations were never to be again withdrawn until the end.

Upon two occasions only have we, indeed, the record of unalterable promises made to a world which is perpetually changing. One was after the Hebraic Deluge, when an eternity of seasons, so long as the world lasted, was promised to the husbandman, and a pledge was placed even in the firmament that waters should no more cover the earth. The second was from the Sepulchre, promising the Comforter and the Holy Spirit: “Lo! I am always with you, until the end.”

Again, those who had adopted the Pauline doctrines, and believed in the mysterious prophecies of the impending dissolution of the world, considered Rome as the last link in the great chain of events, which forestalled the final ruin of creation, and looked on her as fated to evolve that last period, mentioned by the Apostle Paul as already commencing through the mystery of iniquity.¹

Thus, whether regarded as the seat of life and of a second destiny, eclipsing even its first, or whether viewed as the solemn example of the Nemesis overshadowing sin by the gathering veil of eternal death, Rome was ever foremost in the mind of man, and her universal and eternal dominion remained unchanged; and St. Augustine could exclaim, even whilst barbarian hordes threatened the city, and new nations crowded into its walls: “Against thee neither darkness nor barbarism shall prevail, for the world is thine, through the noble radiation of Divine truth.”

The above sentence is the key-note of the greatest of

¹ Thessalonians, chap. ii. v. 2-7.

the works of St. Augustine, "The City of God," a synthetic analysis of the Christian doctrines and philosophy representing the spiritual state of the "elect" after the Lord, in contradistinction to the darkness and ignorance of all other schools of learning and of thought.

St. Augustine excludes authoritatively all other sources of knowledge and learning but such as are drawn from the "Books of God."

History, chronology, ethics, geography, all are to be accepted by us only as given in the old and the new dispensations. The latter are regarded as a complement to the doctrines and prophecies of the former, and the two together as forming the only synopsis of knowledge, learning, and wisdom required by mankind. All profane science was put aside, as useless and dangerous. He reconstructed the theory of the future upon the basis of Christian revelation.

Neither eloquence, nor poetry, nor philosophy, nor the exquisite æsthetic culture of the ancients, far less the splendour of art, found grace with St. Augustine. All these are proscribed as the delusive blandishments of the "City of Mammon." In the Old and the New Testaments only, the pure gold of the "true wisdom" is to be found. The time and the study of man was to be devoted to the regeneration of his heart and life; the "pomps of the world" were to be forsworn for the graces of the spiritual kingdom of Christ. With the weapons of holiness, drawn from the armoury of faith, the demon of Mammon was to be fought.

St. Augustine contemplated the universe as one vast shrine, wrought out by a master hand, still engaged on its every detail, and presiding not only over animate and inanimate nature by general laws, but personally guiding the minutest actions of man and effects of nature. Every single event was therefore predestined and prepared for the final triumph of "Divine justice and truth."

The inspired writers of the Hebrews had caught, he said, glimpses of the divine future by direct glimpses of

heavenly things; and the advent of the Saviour had confirmed and ratified the entire body of the older doctrines.¹

Side by side, and running, as it were, upon each other's path, were evolved the two antithetic phases of human existence. One he entitled the "City of God;" the other the "City of Mammon," both working out the different purposes of God to man: the former inhabited by God's saints, from whom proceeded all goodness and all virtue; the latter full of sullen pride and haughty infatuation. Still, though delivered over to sin and persecutors of the saints, it helped, nevertheless, in the great scheme of Providence, to work out the "purposes of God."

Whosoever listens to the call of the "inner voice" from above belongs to the elect, and is a member of the City of God.

The kingdoms of Babylon and of Rome in the ancient world represented, the one in the East, the other in the West, a prototype of the "City of Mammon." Vast in resources and worldly splendour, in luxury and crime, they served the purposes of Providence in both ways; the first being the ground upon which the destinies of the Jewish nation, who held the oracles of God, were fulfilled; the last, being intended to represent the future destinies of the world, by the promulgation of the new law. The finger of prophecy had, he said, pointed out the separate tasks of both the one and the other. The one was already consummated, but the last was but now beginning: it would not end with this perishable world; it would merge in the kingdom of Christ, transcending time; it meant immortality.² The dominion of Rome had been universal, and the reign of Christ was to be universal. And as it came to pass that the olden law was no other than the preparation for the new, thus every converging influence centred on Rome preparatory to the advent of Christ,³ whilst every after event brought its con-

¹ St. Augustine, *De Civitate Dei*, vol. i. 11, 12, 13.

² *Ibid.*, xi. 12, xiii. et seq.

³ *Ibid.*, xvi., xvii.

current influence to the triumph and universality of the Christian law.¹

Rome, he says, never was so powerful as when, through the religion of Christ, she attached to her standard the hearts of the Barbarians set upon her destruction. The Gauls set fire to Rome when that city was in subjection to her *false gods*. The soldiers of Hannibal would have annihilated its glories, and reduced it to ashes, but Alaric, the "Christian barbarian," submits Rome to his power, while sparing the "Christian city" from ruin.

There is something grand in this epitome of general history, regarded from a purely Christian point of view, in which all events are subordinated to the advent of Christianity, and in which the glories of Greece and Rome are made subsidiary to the one great purpose of the universe, the "Reign of Christ."²

The doctrines of St. Augustine, the results of deep, ardent conviction and of great knowledge, were not allowed to lie buried in the pages of a learned manuscript. . They were at his own request, and under his especial superintendence, brought together in the shape of an "Encyclopædia of Universal History," edited by the Spanish ecclesiastic Paul Orosius.³ The influence of this work upon the spirit of Christianity, with reference to the study of history, must be evident to every reflective mind. Until our own times (when a critical analysis of facts has been substituted for arbitrary propositions, and established as the basis of historical inquiry) the views of St. Augustine have been applied by every successive writer to the reading of general history, up to the time of the general discourse of Bossuet.

Thus it was that the greatness of Rome in the past, in arms and political capacity, and her succeeding triumph, as the supposed chief fountain of Christian faith and grace, pervaded the mind of Europe during the Middle Ages. From St. Augustine to Dante, and from

¹ St. Augustine, *De Civitate Dei*, xviii. 17, et seq., xix. 27.

² *Ibid.*, i. 7, 11, 3, iii. 18, 29, v. 15, 25, 26.

³ Paul Oros. *Hist.*

Dante to more modern times, the "Niobe of nations," though discrowned of her earthly diadem, has never ceased to be regarded with a deeper reverence and a holier awe by realms far beyond those over which her Cæsar's sceptre extended, as the city among the perishing ones of earth alone divine, alone eternal, and alone where the heart of the pilgrim may say, "This is my abiding one."

AUTHORITIES CITED IN CHAPTER II.

1. *Senatus-consulto Aspromano*. Protti de Re Munic. Rom., p. 28, note lii.
2. *Ibid.*, note lix.
3. "Civitatibus omnibus quæ sub imperio populi Romani sunt legari potest, idque a D. Nerva introductum, postea a senatu auctore Hadriano, diligentius constitutum est." *Vespian*, Frag. lib. xxiv. cap. xxvii.

Lib. iv. s. fin. Dig. Leg. Jul. pecul.

CHAPTER III.

Barbarism and Romanism confronting each other—Establishment of
Barbaric Rule—Introduction of the Franco-Teutonic Influence.

AND now, leaving theories apart to work their way slowly throughout society, let us contemplate the scattered elements of civilization in their encounter with barbaric existence ; the modes, manners, tendencies, and temperament of the conflicting races ; the Romanic and the Teutonic being diametrically opposed.

In the formation of the new society, as it was matured in later times, two distinctly different currents may be remarked. On one side the olden cities, forming a nucleus of population, in which the residuum of art and knowledge was to be found, were governed mostly by their own laws. In these, where the ecclesiastical government was subordinate to the military præsidium, the Barbarians maintained a continued force. The division of the cities into parochial districts, the cure of souls under the superintendence of the clergy, and the discharge of the diocesan duties by the pastors, under the supervision of the episcopal clergy, maintained a semblance of organisation, and of a formal recognition of the canon law.

When the Barbarians first embraced Christianity they found the clergy, as we have noted, in possession of considerable power. Ignorant as they were themselves of the rudiments of civilization, they naturally transferred to these new instructors and guides the reverence and submission they had once been accustomed to yield to the ministers of their Pagan creed.

Considering their persons as sacred as their office, they would have deemed it impious to subject them to the same jurisdiction as the laity.

Conscious of their advantage, the clergy established courts, in which every question relating to their functions and character was discussed and judged. They obtained indeed an almost entire exemption from every other authority.

On various pretexts, and with great dexterity, they communicated this privilege to so many persons, and extended their jurisdiction over such a vast variety of cases, that the greater part of those affairs which gave rise to litigation were brought for judgment before the Spiritual Courts.

Whilst one-third of the revenues were levied in tribute by the victors, the towns, when not totally ruined, retained their ancient traditions, and the shadow of their former life.

The great change, however, in the outward aspect of the country was wrought, independently and externally, from burgher life. The Barbarians, strong, manly and brave as the conquered people were effeminate and worthless, courted danger, valued independence, sought isolation, and finally established a new and totally different style of life. The large spaces of unoccupied territory between mansion and mansion were now taken possession of, and made the residences of the Barbarian chiefs, becoming thus centres of an active, semi-rustic, semi-military life. Villages and boroughs soon sprang up under the walls of the fortresses of these hill chieftains, forming the abodes of their dependents, either voluntary and for hire, as "followers," or attached to the soil and property, as serfs or *feddi*. These chieftains became in time the feudal lords, whose lives and exploits give so much picturesque and romantic interest to the annals of the middle ages. Though they subsequently held their domains under tenure of the Empire, as a form, and swore fealty to the Emperor; yet their first possessions were won by the sword, and by the sword they were always ready to maintain them.

Their jurisdiction was supreme in their own territories.

Life and death, torture, the exaction of tribute, all the fundamental privileges of the state were claimed and exercised by every robber chieftain, perched like a bird of prey on some lofty cliff, whence he commanded a view of the entire country around him.

Thus, differently constituted, and differing in habits and in life, the town and the country races, eternally at war, confronted each other with equal hatred and contempt.

The Romanic races, thus stripped of all manliness and absorbed in selfish enjoyments, were devoid of every moral sense; and the want of faith which characterised in every instance their negotiations with the Barbarians frequently drew upon them the vengeance of the latter with so much fury as to threaten the extermination of entire populations. Exasperated to madness by the treachery of the Romans, the Barbarians (who were not at first sanguinary, but rather led on by mere love of conquest and avidity of plunder) became at last formidable from their ferocity. Hordes succeeded to hordes, swarm followed swarm from the forests and marshes of the frozen north; until, in the fifth century, Spain was overrun by the Visigoths, Gaul by the Franks.

The Roman provinces of South Britain were conquered by the Saxons. The Huns invaded Pannonia, and the Ostrogoths obtained possession of Italy.

At this time the Roman provinces of Africa were already overrun by the Vandals, and the Western Empire sank under the influence of what has been called in later days the Teutonic or fair-haired race, an influence which has never been entirely superseded, and which is visible even in our own days in the different features and general aspect of the people and the aristocracies of southern Europe.

During this general disruption, the older society continued in its uninterrupted course on the shores of the Bosphorus. Since the transfer of the capital to Constantinople, that city had risen rapidly in opulence and splendour; partly arising from the influx of vast treasures

from Rome, partly from the Eastern magnificent luxury which stamped a peculiar feature on the civilization of Byzantium. A great school of architecture, of pictorial and decorative art, of literature and learning throve there, blending the wisdom of the ancients with the new impressions and ideas of the Christian dispensation.

Whilst the Eastern Empire was governed by the worst form of despotism, delegated to the hands of the worst instruments of tyranny—swarms of servile tools and flatterers; whilst the very feeling of independence had faded from the crowds of sycophants, and hardly a vestige of nobler feeling can be traced, one bright light shone in the world, and this was the Church of Constantinople. A profound reverence was felt for religion; the learning, the virtues, the example, the precepts of the early Fathers had thoroughly penetrated the souls of men. The Greek language has had the imperishable glory of directing twice the higher destinies of mankind. Imperishable, we say, because, until time itself shall be no more, to that majestic and harmonious tongue must be awarded the privilege of having been the earliest medium through which the Gospels were preached to, and written for, man. There can be no question but that, in a people which held with such tenacity to their privileges of tradition and intellectual superiority, this consummating tie bound still more firmly together the different Grecian tribes or peoples. We naturally find Constantinople to be the seat of the Head Bishop or Patriarch of the Universal Church, during those earlier ages which are revered still, as most nearly approaching those of the founders of the Christian faith. The Patriarch of Constantinople received the homage and deference of all Christendom.

Meanwhile, the lively genius of the Greeks, awakened to a sense of religious controversy, soon manifested in the theological field, the same versatility and keen aptitude for dispute which had distinguished it in the discussions of heathen schools of philosophy.

The dogmas of Christianity also gave rise to a new style of architecture, peculiar to Byzantium, and which still bears its name—a style so harmonious with the rich colouring of nature in the south, and the lines of which fall so aptly into those of southern scenery, as to be inseparably connected together by those who have witnessed their effect.

But whilst, on the one hand, the Greek Church has been consecrated to humanity by its records of and commentaries upon the Christian traditions, the Latin Church, which was still undivided from it, exercised an indefatigable and increasing action on the western world, teaching the arts of peace, and preserving a moral independence in the heart of Barbarian forces. In the Eastern Empire, whilst questions of detail were eagerly canvassed, no need existed for missionary or propagandist bodies, for all accepted, with fervent zeal, the dogmas of Christianity. But in the West, the task of the clergy was various and more difficult. There, where all was new, and all “barbarous,” their first endeavours were to inculcate, through fear of hell, and hope of Heaven, a direct and decided action on the conscience of mankind.

They improved their advantages, as was natural, in every way. By the confessional they obtained unlimited power over rich and poor, high and low; and at the hour of death, when mortal passions were hushed and the terrors of futurity were awakened, culprits of all ranks bowed equally before the priest, and willed their substance to the Church.

When the Gothic chief Theodoric was bidden by the Roman people to assume the command of the city, where he established a strong military præsidium, it must be remembered that he still acknowledged the supremacy of the Emperor of the East; and the supreme jurisdiction of the Church was vested in the Holy Synod of Bishops at the head of which was the Patriarch of Constantinople. But the jealousy of the Bishops of Rome, and their pretensions of direct descent from

St. Peter, had already sown those dissensions which subsequently broke out into open rupture, and finally severed the orthodox, or Greek, and the Roman Catholic Church.

To equipoise the different moral and intellectual gifts of various and conflicting races, to soften the fierceness of hate, the brutality of conquest, and the revolts of servitude, to shield the feeble from utter oppression, and to curb the lawlessness of savage irresponsible force—such was the work of the Middle Ages. And in great part it was owing to the Christian clergy, who offered to the weak the *cloister*, and to the strong the prospect of those sanguinary campaigns for “converting the heathen,” of which the records remain in the annals of the Teutonic knights—the Crusades, the Spanish wars, and the conquests in America. The democratic nature, too, of the Christian faith, in which serf and prince are alike humbled before one Judge, gave the first foundation to the principles which are even now asserting themselves more and more in every generation, and to which the clergy itself, in things temporal, has been compelled (by a higher law than that of any privilege, that of Universal Justice) to submit. No ancient form of government affords any parallel to the increasing democratic force of our day. It is based upon the purest Christian principles of equality, before the human, as under the Divine law; but the first apostles of this law of brotherhood were the Christian clergy of the dark ages.

The Barbarians (the common term under which the various Northern tribes of Heruli, Goths, and Lombards, who in turn conquered the greater part of Italy, were classed) were men of hardy nature, who courted the inclemencies of the seasons, mocked the feebler southern races, plundered, but detested, cities, lived under tents or in rude forts, and made the pleasures of the chase their chief joy in life. Unless wantonly provoked, they were not, as a rule, sanguinary; and records exist to prove that in the rural districts the gentle Barbarian, placed as a guest

in a native family, speedily married the daughter of the colon, became Christian, and soon assimilated himself in all things to the habits of his new family.

When the land was parcelled out in shares and allotted to the chiefs, an entirely new order of society was initiated; an order to which the Peninsula never wholly submitted, and which the strife of ages failed to ever entirely establish, or to thoroughly overturn.

The name of "allodial domain" was given to the lands conquered by the sword, because they were divided into lots; whence *allot*, from *loos*, and the French word *lot* (*loterie*). History is unanimous on the point of this custom amongst Northern tribes, Burgundians, Visigoths, and Longobards. The lands thus divided are called, or alluded to, as "*Sortes Burgundiorum*," or "*Gothorum*." The Franks were used also to cast lots for the division of personal spoils and the general movable booty after a conquest. Two-thirds of the soil of any conquered country were appropriated by the victors.

There the Barbarian possessor settled his domain or manor (*marches*), originally called "*loos*" or "*sors*;" but property was all based exclusively on the allodial right. Territory was sometimes purchased; at times it was inherited by right of succession; often it was conferred as a reward of service, or granted from forfeited estates. Still, by whatever title the right had been originally granted, the proprietor of land was its free and literal lord; and he was, for some time, not only free from imposts himself, but he levied tolls, for his own advantage, on merchandise passing through his domains. Courtesy, as well as self-interest, indeed, prompted the country lord to offer valuable presents, chiefly of furs, hawks (valued at an extravagant rate in the dark ages), and other rural spoils, to the princes and superior officers he was desirous of conciliating. And in the process of time the increasing power of government and necessities of state caused these gifts to be regulated as *fixed tributes*. We find linens, cheeses, wool, and other articles of daily

use, often specified as the tributes to be derived from lands.¹

The first public duty we find authentically levied for public service was the claim for shelter, food, forage, and safe escort, which the king or emperor's envoys, or civil servants, could enforce on every landholder through whose properties they passed on the public service. The insupportable abuses which this privilege gave rise to caused it to be often commuted for a fixed tax. All territorial holdings, without any exception, were liable to this tax. Even the possession of allodial property became at last (as population increased) subject to restrictive bounds; and the gifts of courtesy were prescribed exactly, and their mode of payment defined and enforced.²

Military service was not at first obligatory on the holders of allodial domains; but a chosen chief never found it wanting. Thirst for novelty, for plunder, for action, for revenge were never deficient in the lords of those domains the right to which was won by the sword.

The chief round whom they gathered would then inflame their passions by harangues in which the motives of the campaign were exposed with great vehemence. Amongst the accusations against the enemy, we find great stress laid upon "our pious men being attacked and maltreated *without warning*"—the slaying of hostages—the treating of relatives with indignity and cruelty—their being turned out of their possessions and "robbed of their children"—the latter a heinous crime in the eyes of Northmen, who were freemen, as it exposed their offspring to be sold for slaves. Sometimes the speech of the chief declared that children had been "hung up like slaughtered animals by the leg." Sometimes several hun-

¹ The custom exists in Central Africa to this day, and is ruinous to the most fertile districts; and it existed until quite lately in Turkey. I do not know if it be still in force in Gallicia; but, as late as 1865, the Gallicians were exempted from taxation, on the understanding they were to feed the Austrian garrison.

² Guizot, *iv^{me} Essai: De l'Etat Social et Politique de la France du v^{me} au x^{me} Siècle*, p. 85.

dred maidens had been slaughtered in cold blood.¹ Outrages like these called for vengeance. "They have tied up the arms of our women," said Theodoric, whilst addressing his Franks on one occasion, "to the manes of two separate horses, which were then let loose in two directions, thus mangling the victims by a terrible death. Other miserable creatures were bound hand and foot across the ruts of the chariot wheels, and thus reduced to a mere bloody mass of human flesh and broken bones, over which birds of prey were allowed to batten in company with great hounds."² "Want of faith" was also adduced as a great moving cause of enmity and wrath. In conclusion, the warrior wound up with an appeal "to the God of Justice, who would aid them in their cause, as reason was on their side.

At times, however, the reasons of the chiefs or kings were overruled by their military followers, who would refuse obedience to their commands, and compel them to adopt their own instead. In case the chief or king declined to comply, he was threatened with maltreatment, sometimes with death.³ Language such as this, and the modes of life to which it points, added to the irresponsible liberty every freeman laid claim to, convey some faint picture of barbarian life; and it was long before even a rude code placed a sort of curb on their brutality in Italy.

In the year 553 Italy was once more united to the Byzantine Empire, by the victories of Belisarius and Narses, two generals of Justinian who had already recovered the African provinces from the possession of the Vandals. The Goths were driven from their hold of a great part of Italy, and from their capital, Ravenna, then a large, wealthy, and beautiful city on the sea, the seat of a flourishing commerce, and greatly enriched by the spoils of the adjacent provinces. The harbour was crowded with shipping; canals ran into the heart of the town, as at Venice, in our days; and palaces and churches were erected and

¹ Greg. Tur. lib. iii., cap. vii. ² Ibid.

³ Greg. Tur. lib. iv., cap. xiv. Collec. des Mémoires, tom. i. p. 167.

adorned after the fashion of their prototypes at Constantinople. Some remains of these may be seen even now, and make those which are lost even more deplored. It was from Ravenna that Italian art afterwards seemed to radiate, as from a central focus.

The Gothic tribe of the Longobards, or Lombards, next appeared on the scene. The name of this remarkable people, the only barbaric race which has permanently and visibly affected the material condition of Italy, is disputed. By some it is ascribed to their habit of shaving or cutting close the hair of the head, contrary to the usual custom of Barbarians (amongst whom long and flowing locks were a sign of freedom), and leaving the beard to grow to the waist; by others, to the long-handled axe, or *bart*, their habitual weapon, and a novel and terrible one in the Peninsula. The first onslaught of the Lombards was terrific; they nearly devastated Northern and part of Central Italy, and selected Pavia as their capital.

Alboin, their king, parcelled out the country they had conquered amongst his principal officers. He began to establish the feudal system, granting the title of duke to the chief of every considerable city or province.

At first the supremacy of these chiefs or nobles was confined to the lifetime of the holder, but favour, time, and custom soon made it hereditary. Together with the possession of irresponsible power, the victors entertained the deepest contempt for the vanquished. "We Lombards," says Bishop Luitprand (himself a mild and equitable man), "know of no more appropriate epithet with which to brand our enemies than to call them Romans, as in that term are included all vices and every worst trait of human nature, such as avarice, lying, incontinence, and every other evil act.¹ We may imagine the treatment the vanquished were likely to receive from conquerors who held them in such estimation.

Under one form or another, complete tyranny ruled at this time in Italy. Those portions of the country subject

¹ Luitprand, in Degat. Muratori, lib. ii., part i., p. 481.

to the Emperors of Constantinople were also governed under ducal titles. These supreme governors, "exarchs," or dukes, resided at Ravenna, Rome, and Naples. In Rome, the very name, as well as the authority, of a senate and consuls had been abolished. The exarch ruled as chief over the civil authorities. The Bishop of Rome (under titular submission to the Patriarch of Constantinople) regulated the affairs of the Church.

The excesses of Clephis, the son of Alboin, were so unbearable in North Italy that the Longobards were disgusted with the regal authority; and for twelve years after his death they continued to be ruled by their dukes, without electing a king. The dukes, now absolutely independent, extended their conquests and their tyranny beyond even their former bounds. Finding themselves threatened, however, by new enemies, the "Heads of the Nation" found it expedient to elect Autharis, the son of Clephis, as their supreme chief, A.D. 586, in order that, united under his authority, their powers of defence might be strengthened. Autharis permitted the dukes to hold their title in feud, subject to him; he instituted likewise the oath of fidelity, and levied a regular impost on the revenues of the dukes, in support of the dignity of the crown.

The dukes swore to aid and assist him in time of war.¹ Autharis was the first of the Longobard kings who embraced Christianity; but, like most of the Barbarians, he inclined to the Arian heresy, as their simple intelligence was incompetent to acknowledge the mysteries of the Trinity and the Incarnation. In consequence of this diversity of belief, many disputes arose between the Arian and the Roman Catholic bishops, but liberty of conscience was freely allowed. Nay, during the reign of Rotharis, most cities in Italy had two bishops, one Catholic, the other Arian. Rotharis was the first Longobard prince who gave written laws to the nation, in the year 643.

A general diet of nobles was summoned at Pavia, and

¹ Paul. Diac. de Gestis Longob. lib. ii.

such regulations as they agreed to, he ordered to be written into a code, and observed throughout his dominions. In this code a graduated price was set on the life of man, according to his rank or condition in society.

The slayer of a common slave paid twenty soldi. A layman's life was of less amount than that of a simple deacon. For the murder of the latter, four hundred *gold soldi* was the fine; six hundred that of the life of an ecclesiastic in simple orders; eight hundred were forfeited on the assassination of a monk; and nine hundred on that of a bishop.

It was obviously necessary to afford the clergy (who, in the exercise of their sacred functions, in the reproof of evil, and in the curbing of sin, were incessantly exposed to violence from the savage fury of the Barbarians) every protection the law could afford; and as the above sums were of unattainable amount of payment at that period, the lands, the wife, the children, and the person of the defaulter were liable to be taken and sold into slavery to pay them.

The abuses of this system of exorbitant fines, and the relentless vindictiveness which often prompted them, make the provision of the English Magna Charta—"that no man shall henceforth be amerced beyond his means"—fully intelligible.

In cases where evidence of crime was doubtful the Longobards, like all northern nations, appealed to trial by ordeal, or, as they called it, by "the Judgment of God."

The preference for this mode of trial by warlike nations was so great that even the wise and humane Bishop Luitprand, whilst condemning it as "unjust, impious, presumptuous, and pernicious," pronounced it, at the same time, "too dear" to his countrymen for it to be possible to abolish it.¹

The details attendant on the trial by ordeal complete the picture of this confused and barbaric life. The religion taught by the clergy participated largely in its rude-

¹ Seq. Luitprand, Anno 725-33, Edict by Luitprand.

ness of conceptions ; it had not left aside the superstitions of Paganism, in which fire was an important feature. Instead of glowing pictures of celestial happiness and freedom in a future state being presented to the dying, at the moment of the departure of the soul, its disenthralment from earthly crimes and passions was darkened by the gloomy phantasmagoria of hideous legends, wild traditions, fiendish torments, and all that the grim superstitions of the Pagans, grafted on the visions and dreams of the new faith, could accumulate to torture and subdue the parting soul.

The monstrous torments and insatiable thirst for human blood and misery, which have made the middle ages infamous, had but too well prepared the human mind for the belief of any amount of anguish in a future or purgatorial state ; and it was not till ages had passed that the pure religion of Jesus could penetrate through the sanguinary and unauthorised denunciations which were a source of so much gain to the priesthood. This fiery religion and rude code gave, however, an elementary initiation to a better state of society. The Longobard laws were afterwards reformed by Grimoald, King of the Lombards, and in many cases the Italians appealed to these from choice, except in the cases of punishment for murder. These laws, as far as we know of them, were simple, manly, just, and convey a pleasing impression of the straightforward honesty and directness of purpose of the compilers. Perhaps it was owing to the existence of these qualities, contrary to all other barbarian hosts, that the Lombards effected a firm settlement in Italy, conferred their names on one of its loveliest parts, and, after the first furious and sanguinary invasions, amalgamated themselves so thoroughly with the rural populations as to form one people.

Grimoald also renounced the Arian heresy, converted by John, Bishop of Bergamo. His successor followed his example ; and Arianism was finally relinquished by the whole Longobard nation.¹

¹ Paul. Diac, lib. v.

Once they had entered the fold of orthodoxy, the sterling and noble qualities of the Longobards rapidly developed; and the population of Northern Italy has ever since held the highest place in the esteem of mankind. Wherever the Longobards dwelt any time, as for example in the Lucchese, where one of their earliest churches, supposed to have been Arian, was still to be seen some few years back, the same honourable characteristics are to be remarked. They are by far the most interesting of all the barbaric tribes, and their history and development deserve a far greater space, and much more attention than we can bestow on them.

The Roman clergy, depositaries of their own traditions, had always looked with an evil eye and ill-disguised rivalry on their spiritual superiors in the Eastern Church; but the signal for the first great breach between these branches of Christianity, was the edict of Leo the Isaurian against the worship of images. This edict he enforced throughout the Eastern Empire, and commanded to be carried out in the Western.

But the state of society in the two empires was by this time utterly dissimilar. The highly civilized population of Constantinople, imbued with æsthetic culture of paganism, reacted against the olden idolatrous worship, by the endeavour to banish graven images from the presence of the faithful in Christian churches, bringing into use a symbolical language to substitute the idea for the material form. But the populations of the west, of rude and barbarous origin, could neither comprehend subtle disquisitions, nor penetrate mysteries matured by a dogmatic acumen calculated to the production of speculative thought; they were still fervent "idolaters," that is, a religion unaccompanied by visible images was incomprehensible to them. The edict of the Emperor met, therefore, with determined opposition. In some cities, as at Ravenna and at Naples, a terrible outbreak of popular fury followed its publication; the life of the

exarch was threatened. The Bishop of Rome protested against the edict; it abolished an old time-honoured custom. The ground was laid for the schism, which did not fail ere long to sunder the Greek from the Roman Church. The latter above all perceived the policy of maintaining a spirit of unity amongst its members, and of the unchangeable nature of its dogma and rites. The Church, "founded by St. Peter, was to rule through the successors of Peter to the end of time." No discussions were ever to be admitted of its creed, save by its own members. This faith gave strength to their policy; and that policy organised the mediæval creed of Western Europe.

A change was then on the verge of taking place which finally effected the separation of Italy from the Eastern Empire. When Luitprandt, King of the Longobards, heard of the rebellion of the people of Ravenna, and of their resistance to the edict of the Emperor, he eagerly grasped at so favourable an opportunity for the gratification of personal ambition.

He suddenly appeared at the gates of the city with a powerful force. The exarch behaved with fidelity and courage; but finding himself unable to cope with the superior forces of Luitprandt, he retired privately from the city, and the latter was taken by storm, and sacked by the Longobards of all the treasures accumulated by Western emperors, Gothic kings, and Greek exarchs.

Luitprandt aspired to the subjection of Italy. But the alarm had been taken by the Roman bishops, and the power of the Longobards was checked by that of the Franks, at the interposition of Rome.

The Bishops of Rome were elected by popular suffrage, and owed their influence as much to their personal virtues and capacity, as to their sacred office. Many of the early bishops were men of great eminence. St. Gregory (who died in the year 604) had negotiated on equal terms with princes in matters of state; and his successors divided their time between the offices of religion and the cares of State. The object of their policy was to assert their

independence of the Patriarch of Constantinople, without falling a prey to the savage power of the Kings of Italy. Gregory II., who had braved the anger of Leo the Isaurian, and refused obedience to the edict against the worship of images, beheld with alarm the increasing power of the Longobards, and dreaded lest they might possess themselves of Rome. The secular affairs of the city were at that time ruled by a duke, who was supposed to yield obedience to the Exarch of Ravenna, nominally dependent on the Emperor of the East.

Of the two conflicting powers, Gregory dreaded most that of the Barbarian Luitprandt, perhaps secretly hoping that Leo the Isaurian might, in the future, be prevailed upon to set aside the edict, in so far as the worship of images was concerned. Under this impression, he invited the aid of Ursus, Exarch of Venice, against the Longobards.

This assistance having been granted, Ravenna was retaken during the absence of Luitprandt, and before he could find time to march to its aid.

On the strength of this great service done to the Empire through his intercession, the Bishop of Rome sued for a revocation of the obnoxious edict.

On the other hand, Leo had become the more obstinately bent on carrying it out; and even within the precincts of Rome itself, stifling every feeling of gratitude for the recovery of Ravenna (under the pretext that the Bishop of Rome had effected it solely from motives of self interest), and incensed in the highest degree at his opposition to his decree, he hinted his desire for the assassination of Gregory, and charged the Exarch Paul, under "any circumstances" (if he could not effect more severe measures), "to send him over to Constantinople in chains."

Gregory II., nothing daunted, answered by solemnly excommunicating the Exarch for attempting the enforcement of the edict; he, moreover, exhorted all the Italian cities to continue steadfast in their opposition to the encroachment of the Eastern Emperor, and in their ad-

herence to the Romish Church, of which, he, the Roman Bishop or Pope, was the spiritual head.

Gregory, in fact, showed a power of settled purpose, a determined will, which never fails to exercise a great influence over the masses of mankind, as it is a quality with which most men are unacquainted. Even the sympathies of Luitprandt were enlisted in the favour of the Pope; and the King of the Longobards declared himself his ally.

The Italian population, stirred by the direct appeal of the Bishop of Rome in favour of their superstitions, rose, with one accord, in rebellion against the edict. At Ravenna and Naples the unfortunate exarchs were murdered, the iconoclasts slaughtered, and blood and anarchy prevailed throughout the land.

Gregory II., cautious and wary, distrusted the King of the Lombards, considering him to be actuated by purely selfish motives. He consequently opened negotiations with Charles Martel for the defence of his flock, in case the Eastern Emperor should attempt further encroachments on his rights. The Pope's nuncios were sent to, and received with favour in France, and a treaty was soon concluded between the two powers, A.D. 731, on the strength of which the Franks, glad to intervene in the affairs of Italy, bound themselves to be the protectors of the Church.

The shrewd commander, Charles Martel, and the astute churchman now played into each other's hands; but, before the alliance could be completely ratified, considerable changes were made by death. Gregory II. did not live to see the fruits of his negotiations with France. He was succeeded by Gregory III. A few more years, and Constantine Copronymus succeeded his father, Leo the Isaurian, on the imperial throne, which he ascended with a tincture of still deeper horror of the worship of images than his father had shown. He launched a new edict against the invocation of saints, and commanded it to be enforced in Rome.

This new cause for irritation confirmed the Romans

in the resolution of separating themselves entirely from the empire. The moment was also opportune to effect this purpose, for, having secured the protection of the Franks, they had little to fear from Constantinople. They accordingly drove out of their city such of the imperial officers as had hitherto been suffered to continue in it; and thus abolished every shadow of subjection to the Emperor of Constantinople, A.D. 741. Meanwhile more of the actors of the world's drama were carried off by death, to make room for new ones. Charles Martel, the bold champion of the Roman faith disappeared, and Gregory III. died also, giving place to Zachary, a prelate of an enterprising and energetic disposition. He determined on the aggrandisement of the Papal influence, from the first moment of his election to the chair of St. Peter. He paid a visit to the Longobard king, Luitprandt, and obtained from him the restitution of the towns which had been ceded to him as a ransom for Rome, when the latter city was in danger of falling into his hands (A.D. 741). Luitprandt, having relinquished all ambitious designs as to the mastery of Italy, yielded to the solicitations of the Pope; and soon afterwards died at peace with the Church. Rachis, his successor, confirmed the treaty with the Pope, of which, however, he soon after repented; and inflamed with the thirst of conquest, he suddenly invaded the Roman dukedom, and laid siege to Perugia. Zachary, trusting to the influence of persuasion, repaired to the camp of Rachis, and so forcibly represented to him the doom reserved for those who unjustly invade the property of others that the king not only raised the siege, but being completely subdued by the eloquence of the Pontiff resigned his crown, and retired to the monastery of Monte Cassino, founded by St. Benedict, and already highly famed; he there took the habit, and died a simple monk.

Whilst affairs were in this situation in Italy, Pepin, son of Charles Martel, governed France, under the title of "Maire du Palais," whilst the feeble Childeric III. nominally occupied the throne. It was at this period

that the first direct interference of the Pontiff in state affairs is recorded. Pepin, the powerful Mayor of the Palace (probably aware of what Zachary's answer would be), presented to him a "case of conscience." He desired to know "whether a prince incapable of governing, or a minister who ably supported the royal authority, ought to possess the title of King."

Zachary decided in favour of the minister. The French clergy encouraged the usurpation of Pepin, because he had restored to them the lands of which Charles Martel had stripped them; the nobles respected him, as brave and able, and the people supported him, as they despised sluggard kings. The judgment of the Pope now silenced every scruple; Childeric was deposed, degraded, and shut up in a monastery. Pepin was raised to the throne in the year 752, and solemnly anointed at Soissons by Boniface, Archbishop of Mentz, the celebrated apostle of the Germans. This ceremony marks the introduction of the rite of anointing; borrowed from the Jews, and used in France before at the baptism of Clovis, it was for the first time brought in as part of the ritual of the coronation of kings; and thus the Church added another link to the chain she was riveting round the necks of sovereigns in the West. In the East, the emperors had long been crowned by the Patriarch of Constantinople, and the crowning and anointing were deemed necessary to their being recognised as sovereigns.

The ceremonies of crowning and anointing by the hands of the clergy were held by the people to invest the persons of Rulers with a kind of Divine sanction, and therefore to command additional respect.

The bishops, improving on the advantage thus gained, afterwards added another claim; they affected to believe themselves entitled to confer the title and prerogatives of royalty, simply by the fact of the anointing by their hands.

Now, returning to the affairs of Italy, we find that Stephen had succeeded Zachary on the Papal throne,

and now besought the aid of France against Astulphus, another king of the Lombards, who threatened his domains. Pepin, mindful of the judgment of Zachary, and of his obligations to the Church, promised his assistance, and sent two ambassadors to conduct the Pope to Paris, where a treaty favourable to the See of Rome was concluded. Pepin and his two sons, Charles and Carloman, on this occasion received from Stephen the honours of Holy Unction, and the title of Roman Patrician.

Pepin, however, before he commenced his expedition in-favour of the Pope, endeavoured to save the effusion of blood by negotiation, and besought the restoration of the lands conquered by Astulphus to the Holy See. Finding Astulphus deaf to his entreaties, he crossed the Alps and advanced to Pavia. Astulphus now awakened to his danger, sued for peace, and obtained it, on condition of giving up to the Pope, not to the Emperor of the East, the places he had conquered. To this he apparently consented, but no sooner had Pepin departed from Italy than he faithlessly rushed into the Roman territory, took several cities, and laid siege to the capital.

In this extremity Stephen had once more recourse to his protector, the King of France. Writing to him those remarkable letters still extant, in which he artfully introduces the "Rights of St. Peter" (to whom a donation of the exarchates had been made in the late treaty), he conjured Pepin, his two sons, and the States of France to come to his relief, promising all good things in this world and in the next, in the case of their compliance, and denouncing damnation as the consequence of refusal.

Pepin, moved by this language, it would seem, crossed the Alps once more; and Astulphus again took refuge at Pavia. A fatal and final blow was, ere long, to be dealt to the Longobard power. Pepin pressed the siege of Pavia, and Astulphus, finding himself unable to hold out, promised to fulfil the former agreement, giving hostages as a pledge of his fidelity, and putting the Pope in immediate possession of Comacchio, then a place of considerable importance.

When the Emperor of the East became informed of the treaty between the Pontiff and Pepin, he remonstrated through his Ambassadors against it, and even offered to pay the expenses of the war, provided the exarchates were restored to his authority. But Pepin replied with much spirit, "that the exarchates had lately belonged to the Longobards, who had acquired them by right of arms, and that the same right had conferred them on himself. He had bestowed them, he said, on St. Peter, that the Catholic Faith might be preserved from the damnable heresies of the Greeks, and all the money in the world should never make him revoke that gift."

The exact nature of the gift of Pepin has been much disputed; but before his return to France, after his victories over the Longobards, he renewed his donation to St. Peter, bestowing on Stephen and his successors the exarchates *Æmilia*, now *Romagna*, and *Pentapolis*, now the *March of Ancona*, to be possessed by them for ever—the Kings of France, as Roman patricians, protectors of the Roman people, retaining only a nominal superiority over these territories, and even that was soon forgotten.

This era marks an important turning point in history. More than a mere change of dynasty, the accession to the throne of Pepin, from being simply Mayor of the Palace, marks the rise of a more powerful and far superior race in Western Europe. From the supremacy of the Teutonic race, allied with the Church of Rome, may be dated an entirely new form of civilization, and in a generally understood formula the ages emphatically termed *Dark* may be said to close, and the succeeding period of time, termed *Mediaeval*, to begin, with the great *Carlovingian* dynasty.

Deeply rooted causes inherent in race, and favoured by circumstances, brought about the supremacy of the Teutonic race in Western Europe—a supremacy which was to exercise so powerful an influence over the destinies of the world.

The Northern peoples, predestined to take so great a

share in the new society, were now, for the first time, brought into action with their feudal and military organisation upon the decrepit systems of the South ; and the union of the provinces of Neustria and Austrasia under the rule of Pepin and Charlemagne was the foundation of a new race, and of an entirely novel influence—that of the “ Franco-Teutonic ” empire. Hitherto the tribes of the North had been isolated by petty wars between their various chiefs, by want of union, and by conflicting interests ; but they may be said to take a direct influence in the world after the conquest of Gaul.

After the first Frank conquest, the Franco-Gallic kingdom had been divided into two portions, forming on the one hand the kingdom of Neustria, and on the other that of Austrasia. The forest of the Ardennes, or Silva Carbonaria (then of very much greater extent than at present), formed the nominal boundary and line of demarcation between the two. In the kingdom of Neustria were comprised the provinces situated between the Meuse and the Loire. That portion of the kingdom of Austrasia which extended into Gaul comprised the country situated between the Meuse and the Rhine ; but the habits and character of the races that inhabited these several districts separated them far more effectually than any mere territorial demarcation, however accurate and defined.

In Austrasia the Franks had first settled on their descent from the German wilds. They belonged to those confederate German tribes who had never crossed the Rhine, and whose habits were wandering and predatory. They would combine for purposes of aggression, and these once successful, they would return to their forests and morasses, and lofty cliffs, in contempt and defiance of the laws and customs of civilization. The civilization of Rome had never taken any hold of the natives of the Rhenish border (or, as they called it, the Fatherland) ; but, on the other hand, it was indelibly stamped on the interior of Gaul. Writers of the tenth century¹ apply

¹ “ Quumque Burgundiorum regna transiens Franciam quam Roma-

the name of *Francia Teutonica* to *Neustria*. The German language prevailed among the former, and the Romanic dialect among the latter. Physically, the German or Teutonic races, and the Gaelic or Celtic tribes, resembled each other; but there the likeness between the two ceased. Both were of great, in some cases (as with the Frieslanders) of even gigantic stature, with huge muscular limbs, fair skin, and blue but fiery eyes; the hair in general was either red or flaxen. But the Germans were simple in taste, homely in dress, and frugal in life. The Gauls delighted in brilliant dresses, adorned with stripes or bands of lively colours, and were covered with ornaments of bronze, copper, gold, silver, rudely-wrought sparkling crystals, and even compositions of paste coloured to imitate gems. The simple though ferocious German wore no ornament save his iron ring, from which his first homicide released him. The Gaul was irascible and savage in his wrath, though a less formidable foe in the long run than the indomitable Teuton. The policy, too, of each race differed widely; whilst the government of both may be said to have been republican—though nominally they professed to yield homage to a sovereign—the Gaelic tribes were aristocratic,¹ in which the influence of clanship was a predominant feature.

The German system, though nominally regal, was in reality democratic. "In Gaul," says Cæsar, "were two orders, the nobility and priesthood, whilst the people were all slaves." This deep-laid distinction of race, customs, instincts and manners created a gulf between the two far greater than can be described, by noting the mere difference of the geographical positions of the various provinces; and though after the Frank conquest a modification had taken place, still the originally various natures of the Romanic influences which interposed, served to keep the two distinct. On the one side, therefore, stood the kingdom of the German Franks, *Francia-nium dicunt ingredi vellet.*" Luitprand, lib. i., cap. vii. Elsewhere the Austrasian Franks are called "*Francos Teutonicos.*"

¹ "The Rise of the Dutch Republic." By John Lothrop Motley. Vol. i., p. 5.

Teutonica; and on the other, the kingdom of the Gallo-Romanic Franks, or *Francia-Romana*.

The power of the nominal Sovereigns of these two kingdoms was small, compared with that of the great landholders; the latter exercised unquestioned despotism within their own territories, and the Kings had for their Court or adherents, their *leudes* or *fidèles*, and the clergy. The principal aim of the Sovereigns was to keep on good terms with their great nobles; for this reason, they generally selected the most powerful of these to fill the office of Mayor of the Palace, in the hope that they would thus overawe their peers, and respect the dignity of the crown. But these hopes were vain, for the great vassals preferred the advancement of their own class to the strengthening of the power of sovereignty, and the Mayorship of the Palace became first an elective, and then an hereditary charge, which fell to the portion of the leading nobles of Neustria and Austrasia. The latter possessed, with its Teutonic traditions, a corporate constitution, with self-governing and independent principles.

In Neustria the Romanic traditions permitted a greater laxity of rule. At first the Frank kings were absolute in power, and four kings had governed the united Frank monarchy before the revolution took place which brought in the Carlovingian dynasty. These four kings were Clothaire the First, who reigned from 558 to 561, to the time of Clovis II., who reigned from 655 to 656.¹

Neustria, which had far superior advantages of civilization and of position, was chosen by Clovis, after the Frank conquest, as the seat of Government.

It must ever be borne in mind that the vestiges of Roman civilization had never been lost in Neustria, and that the habits of the people and the greater influence of the clergy, made them far more amenable to Royal

¹ Clothaire I. who reigned from 558 to 561; Clothaire II. from 613 to 628; Dagobert I. from 631 to 638; Clovis II. from 655 to 656. Clovis I. had established himself in Neustria with the Franks, who at that time acquired the preponderance they never lost in that country, so well calculated from climate and position to attract definite colonization.

authority than could be the case of more remote Austrasia, exposed to perpetual inroads from the still wilder and more barbarous heathens, Frisons, Thuringians and Saxons, who kept the warlike and savage nature of the inhabitants, of necessity, fully alive; and thus, for long, prevented their sovereigns emulating those of the more peaceful and better protected Neustria.

During the fourth century the rivalries of the two kingdoms assumed a definite form, in the persons of the two celebrated Queens, Fredegonda and Brunehault. The power of Chilperic and Fredegonda was far greater than that of Brunehault, and the Austrasian kings of the Rhenish border, and the ambitious Queen had formed the design of increasing that of the latter. The nobles of Austrasia formed a compact oligarchy, and sought to form an alliance with those of Neustria, still more threatened by the genius and daring of Fredegonda.

This league of nobles compelled Clothaire II. to put Brunehault to death, and the success of the conspiracy was due to the preponderance of the Germanic Franks, and to their tenacity of purpose in retaining their own independence.

During this conflict between the great landowners and the kings, the power of the Mayors of the Palace of Austrasia had become preponderant. It was hereditary in the family of Pepin, issued from the greatest landholder of the country. It had been steadily rising in influence from the year 630 to 752, from the first Pepin de Landen, or "le vieux," to Pepin "le bref," so called from his unusually short stature.

When, during the commencement of the eighth century, Neustria had fallen a prey to an ever-increasing confusion, involving the ruin of both Kings and Mayors of the Palace, the Austrasian Franks had rallied round the family of Pepin, which upheld and represented the great and glorious warlike traditions of the Fatherland. Amidst the chiefs of many warlike tribes, who had crossed the Alps with Charles Martel, this family had greatly distinguished itself, and when Pepin was raised to the throne, it was by

the suffrage of the army, sanctioned by religion, and ratified by the applause of the nobles.

When Stephen II. went to France to perform the ceremony of the sacred chrism, or anointing of Pepin, his wife Bertrade, and of his two sons, Carloman and Charles, the Frank nobles bound themselves by an oath never to elect a king from the issue of any other man.¹

Pepin was a man of great mental capacity and personal energy, though the superior genius and the great fortunes of his celebrated son have caused him to be somewhat overlooked in history. Instead of seeking to reign despotically, he wisely invited his nobles to join once more in general National Assemblies to consider state affairs, and to promote the general welfare of the country (these assemblies having almost fallen into forgetfulness during the preceding years of misrule and anarchy). Even the seat of sovereignty was withdrawn from its former post, and transferred into the heart of the older German Fatherland.

The cities of Aix-la-Chapelle, of Worms, and of Paderborn as capitals, caused a rampart to be placed against the incessant inroads of the Barbarians—Danes, Saxons, Thuringians, and Frisons, who, since the time of the Romans, had constantly been struggling to settle westwards and south. All these, after years of warfare and hideous slaughter, were however brought into subjection by Charlemagne; and this great name, which is that of an epoch in the history of man as that of a conqueror, became also immortal as the first regenerator of modern society.

¹ Ut unquam de alterius lumbis regem in ævo presumant eligere.

CHAPTER IV.

Charlemagne and his Era—Introduction of Teutonic Influence—Alliance between the Tiara and Crown—Commencement of Mediæval Times.

THE law of transmutation presides over the moral and intellectual development of society at large, and over the preservation of material interests. In spite of continual modification and mutation in all things human, the course of certain moral, intellectual, and political phenomena has been evolved with a continuous regularity which has assumed the permanent form of "law." The same law continues in action now. "The states of Europe," says Gervinus, "since the commencement of the Christian era, form as connected and general a history as that of the group of states of the Greek Peninsula and its colonies in antiquity. The same order and the same law are revealed in the course of their internal development in both periods; and in the history of the whole human race this law may be again observed in its largest manifestations. From Oriental despotism to aristocracy, from the government of the ancients and the middle ages founded on slavery and serfdom, to the state policy of modern times, which is yet in the course of development, a regular progress may be perceived from the intellectual and civil freedom of one alone, to that of the few and of the many. But where states have completed their term of existence we may again observe a descent in civilization, freedom, and power from the highest point in this ascending scale of development, from the many to the few, and from the few again to one alone.

"This law may be traced throughout history in every separate state as well as a special group of states."¹

¹ Gervinus, *Introduction to the History of the Nineteenth Century*. Sec. ii., p. 3.

Aristotle, with remarkable acumen, had already explained this law in its bearings upon the history of the Greek nation. "In the oldest times, as Homer describes them, when the population was yet scanty, civilization and wealth, even the training to the use of arms and their possession were confined to the few. Patriarchal kings reigned in Greece, who were the sole proprietors of chariots, the leaders of troops, and presided over sacrifices or in cases of jurisdiction. When, after a time, the number of educated wealthy men capable of bearing arms increased, and superiority in war was decided by the ablest horseman, the equestrian order—the aristocracy—became the governing body of the state, and the kingly power was either limited, as in Sparta, or set aside, as in every other country.

"As the increasing prosperity of the middle class of the people kept pace with the degeneracy of the aristocracy, caused by their egotism and selfish ambition, and as by improvement in the science of war the foot-soldier acquired consideration, and the navy called for the services of the lower orders, the rule of the people—the democratic form of government—began to take the place of the aristocratic; or rather, as states gained in power and extent, and their policy and mode of warfare became more systematic and scientific, mixed constitutions arose, in which the noble, the middle class, and the lower orders of the people took their stand beside one another, each possessed of their own peculiar privileges."

The development of the states of Europe throughout the Middle Ages and in our modern times has followed the same course, although on a greater scale, and in a less serried order of events. There have always been epochs in history in which, by a given combination of events, men of creative genius project the light of their own individual qualities upon a whole generation, and seem to stamp an era with their names, being apparently endowed with the double power of the ideal, which can

¹ Gervinus. Introduction to the History of the Nineteenth Century. Sec. ii., p. 4.

mould in thought, and the practical, which can create in effect a new phase in society.

The moral and religious constitution of society, its judicial and military polity, have generally, in their commencement, risen from no other source.

Charles, afterwards surnamed Charlemagne, the son of Pepin le Bref, was a man endowed with all the attributes and the genius of this initiative caste. Possessed of all the qualities and all the faults of his race, and of a powerful and fertile nature, he resumed in himself the most perfect attributes of Teutonic individuality.

A rage for conquest, and an unappeasable thirst for dominion over the "State and the Church," formed the sum and substance of his life. He looked upon himself as the leading star, the luminous point, whence the renovated light of the sacred Roman Empire was to radiate over the darkness of the world. Reminiscent of the past splendours and of the unity of the Roman Empire, it was his aim to give some semblance of organic law to society, to initiate some improvement in the judicial and military polity of the vast realm which in the course of time and by right of conquest he was called upon to govern.

A few of the most important events that mark this new era are deserving of the utmost attention, being, as it were, the foundations upon which many institutions not yet obsolete are based.

Omitting matters of minor interest, we must first recall the events which brought the Imperial crown on the brow of Charles; for his consecration to supremacy at the hand of the Roman Pontiff forms the era from whence the civilization of the Middle Ages may be said to begin.

Charles and Carloman were, it will be remembered, the sons of Pepin le Bref. Carloman died early, leaving a widow named Bertha and two sons. Charles therefore found himself alone, at the head of a kingdom which was already powerful, and which he determined to govern with uncontrolled will. Hence arose his quarrel with

Desiderius, King of the Longobards, who wished to persuade Adrian I. to crown and anoint the two sons of the deceased Carloman, in order that they might enjoy a share of the regal authority conjointly with their uncle Charles. The young princes and their mother had taken refuge at the Court of Desiderius. This gave Charles a pretext for interference in Italy. Adrian, though disposed to oblige Desiderius, refused to crown the young princes, not wishing to incur the displeasure of Charles, whom he looked upon from past antecedents as the natural ally of the Church, and as the only prince capable of protecting him with a strong hand against his foes.

Enraged at the Pope's refusal, Desiderius ravaged the patrimony of St. Peter, and threatened Rome. At this juncture Adrian sent nuncios to Charles entreating his aid, and inviting him to the conquest of Italy. His wrath against Desiderius exceeding all bounds, the French monarch received the Pope's invitation with joy. He collected a great army, which he brought over with him, crossing the Alps, doubtless with the intention of extinguishing the Lombard supremacy in Italy and establishing his own. The future conqueror forced the passes of the Alps without much difficulty, having descended by a different route from that guarded by the vigilance of Desiderius; thus he entered Italy unmolested, and the King of the Lombards, unable to keep the field against his force, retired to Pavia, sending his son Adalgisus, together with the widow and sons of Carloman, to Verona. Charles having meantime besieged and blockaded Pavia, marched on Verona. The city was bravely defended by Adalgisus; but, despairing of ultimate success, the latter fled to Constantinople, where he was received with kindness by the Greek Emperor.

Verona soon after surrendered to Charles, who immediately seized the objects of his jealousy, Bertha and her sons, and sent them under escort to France. From this time they were never heard of more! During the siege of Pavia, Charles, desirous of visiting Rome, had already

received tokens of high favour from Adrian; he was received (A. D. 774) with great pomp and ceremony by the Pontiff, the clergy, magistrates, judges, and dignitaries of every rank, who all came out to meet him, accompanied with banners and insignia, singing hymns, repeating psalms, and greeting him amidst the sounds of popular acclamation with the words: "Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord." Charles did not fail on this occasion to confirm his father's donation of territory to St. Peter, and after this episode, he returned to the camp before Pavia.

The moment of victory now at hand, a pestilence having broken out among the Longobards in the city which they had defended with bravery and obstinacy, Desiderius was forced to surrender Pavia. With his capital he, his wife, and his children fell into the power of the conqueror. Charles ordered them to be carried away to France, as he had ordered the transfer of Bertha and of his nephews; and, in like case with the latter, the silence of death responds to our inquiries after their ulterior fate.

Thus ended the supremacy of the Longobards in Italy, after their kingdom had existed two hundred and six years. Italy had up to that time been shared by the Lombards, the Venetians, the Pope, and the Eastern Emperor.

The Venetians had risen to high consideration by their trade in the Levant, and bore no small sway in the affairs of Italy, though their territory on the Peninsula was comparatively limited. The Pope, it will be remembered, was master of the exarchates and Pentapolis.

The dukedom of Naples and a few cities in the two Calabrian provinces were ruled by the Emperor of the East; the rest of Italy, which had belonged to the Longobards, was claimed by Charles by right of conquest, namely, the dukedoms of Friuli, Spoleto, and Benevento, the provinces of Liguria and Tuscany, and the *Alpe Cottiae*, which portion of Italy was styled the "Kingdom of Lombardy." The portion of land on the Italian

coast, over which the Venetians virtually ruled, and called the Province of Venetia, was also nominally under the sway of the Lombards.

Charles was now crowned with the iron crown, still existing at Monza, King of Italy, and a new and more regular form of government began from that date.

Charles, after consulting with the Pontiff, judiciously agreed that the people of Italy should be permitted to live under their former laws.

The feudal system was in practice, and its institutions were ratified by new grants. Accordingly, the Dukes of Friuli, Spoleto and Benevento were allowed to retain the same authority over those regions as they had formerly enjoyed under the Longobard kings. These, however, as all the lesser dukes, who were suffered to keep possession of their former privileges, were obliged to take the same oath of allegiance to Charles; and this oath he commanded should be renewed from year to year. Charles, however, committed the wardenship of the boundaries of his new kingdom, and of the territories of the cities, to counts of his own creation, invested with great authority. These boundaries were called *Marches*; and those who were wardens of them were styled Counts of the Marches, or Marquises. It was their province to administer justice over all his dominions, and inspectors were charged with the duty of seeing that this portion of their charge was not neglected.

In order that Italy under this feudal oligarchy should not be left without a semblance of freedom at least, Charles was accustomed to summon a general assembly of bishops, abbots, and barons, so often as he revisited the country, in order to settle affairs of national importance. The Lombards had admitted the order of barons only to sit in their councils. The Franks acknowledged the existence of two orders in theirs, the high clergy and nobility, who were admitted to equal rights. This custom, through the intervention of Charles, was made good for the first time in Italy, and acted like oil on the flames of ecclesiastical ambition; for, finding them-

selves summoned by equal right to these councils with the nobles, they were raised to a rank, power, and influence they could not otherwise have acquired.

The conquest and pacification of Italy left Charlemagne leisure for further territorial aggrandisements, and for that system of religious conversion by the alternative of wholesale butchery, which was his favourite mode of spreading the doctrines of Christianity. His massacres of the unoffending and brave Saxons form the most revolting page of his history. On one occasion he commanded the slaughter of five thousand men in cold blood; he then compelled the survivors to be baptized under penalty of death, and in his famous "Capitulars," or ordinances for the Saxons, he condemned those who broke the rules of Lent to the most savage penalties. No obstacles daunted the energies of Charlemagne, and no conquests satisfied his ambition. Besides the Saxons and Longobards, he vanquished the Abares or Huns, plundered their capital, and advanced as far as Raab on the Danube. He likewise made an expedition to Spain, and carried his victorious arms to the banks of the Ebro. Charles, though so constantly engaged in war, and stained with all the sanguinary ferocity of a barbaric conqueror, did not neglect the arts of peace. Indeed, his highest and truest fame rests upon the energy with which his powerful and versatile mind rested upon the contemplation of the necessity of the latter, and it is this (at a period of such indescribable preponderance of brutal force) that stamps upon him the seal of genius of the very loftiest kind. We have seen how he called and encouraged public assemblies for the settling of affairs both religious and secular, and how he permitted the current laws of all the subject countries to subsist with few alterations. He also caused all roads to be repaired, new ones to be opened, bridges to be constructed, and rivers to be deepened, and made navigable for commerce. He also projected the construction of a great canal which was to open an uninterrupted communication between the German Ocean and the Black Sea, by uniting the

Danube and the Rhine; and though it failed, for want of those mechanical aids which the rude state of science could not at that time supply, the scheme was of a statesmanlike grandeur which deserves to be recorded.

Charlemagne instituted a rigid frugality in the domestic routine of his palace, of which the quaint and yet significant details have come down to posterity, and his Spartan economy forms a singular contrast to the senseless and profligate luxury of the court of Constantinople. He had fixed hours for study, which he rarely omitted whether in the camp or the court; and notwithstanding his numberless cares, he even found time to order a collection of the old Frank ballads to be made into a sort of historical series, with a view to illustrate the annals of the Frank monarchy. This collection has unfortunately been lost, but it is not unlikely that the *Nibelungenlied* offers some resemblance to the lays of which it must have been composed; and the allusions in the latter to the "spirits of the waters of the Danube," rising to repel the invaders of the North, would almost seem to point to the incursion of Charlemagne into Hungary.

As a mark of the rudeness of the age, however, it deserves to be noted that even Charlemagne, so far in advance of it in intellectual capacity, never acquired the art of writing, and signed the documents submitted to his approbation by making a cross with the point of a stylet on the parchment.

Fond of the society of learned men, he assembled them from all parts of Europe. Besides his band of Italian grammarians, he drew Alcuin, an Englishman of great learning, to his side, and placed him at the head of the Royal Academy, of which he was himself a member. He established "grammar schools" in all the cathedrals and principal abbacies throughout the realm for teaching grammar, arithmetic, writing, and church music¹—a significant and most important innovation on ignorance, at that time so dense, that it must be remembered, even the higher ecclesiastical canons could not sign their

¹ Eginhard, *Vit. Car. Mag.*

names to the canons of those councils of which they were members, and when it was considered a sufficient qualification for priesthood to be able to read the Gospels and understand the Lord's Prayer.

Charles was no less goaded by the spear of spiritual ambition than by temporal desire. To shine as the leading star in theological councils, and proclaim his decisions as law, was amongst his most fervent joys. When presiding in councils assembled merely for the discussion of the most frivolous points of theology, he was not content with the position of "Protector," but seemed to aspire to that of "Head of the Church," as the Greek Emperors were called. We find him at the Council of Frankfort, A.D. 794, seated on a throne, with one of the Papal Legates on either hand, and three hundred bishops assembled.

The object of this council was to examine a certain doctrine mooted by two Spanish bishops, who, in order to refute the accusation of Polytheism, brought against the Christians by the Jews and Mahomedans, proclaimed that "Jesus Christ was the Son of God only by adoption."

Discussions on the Trinity and other theological mysteries had already agitated the Eastern Church and produced endless controversies amongst the Greeks. But the Latin Church, as we have remarked, maintained its unity by forbidding all discussion. Up to this date the clergy only had ever held supremacy in religious affairs, but on this occasion King Charles, after opening the Assembly, proposed the condemnation of the Spanish priests for heresy, and the Council decided in conformity to his will.

In a letter addressed by Charles to the Churches of Spain,¹ he thus expresses himself (referring to that Council and his decision):—"You entreat me to judge of myself. I have done so. We have assisted as an auditor and arbiter in an Assembly of Bishops. We have examined, and by the grace of God we have settled what must be

¹ Russell, *Modern Europe*, Vol. i., Part i., p. 66.

believed." The Eastern Emperor could scarcely have used a more positive language than this.

On the subject of images, however, Charles went to a still greater length. Leo IV. the son of Constantine Copronymus, as zealous as his father for the extirpation of images, had banished his wife Irene, a beautiful and ambitious woman, merely because she concealed images under her pillow. On the death of her husband, however, when Irene became Regent during the minority of her son, Constantine Porphyrogenitus, she re-established the worship to which she clung so firmly. The Second Council of Nice accordingly decreed that "an honorary worship should be accorded to images, whilst a real adoration should be yielded to God alone."

The translation of the Acts of this Council, sent to France by Adrian, were so garbled that the sense of the article relating to images seemed to run thus: "I receive and honour images, according to that adoration which I pay to the Trinity."

This was too much for Charles's patience. Incensed at such impiety, he composed, with the aid of the clergy, the so-called "Caroline Books," in which the "Council of Nice" is treated with the utmost contempt. He sent these books to the Pope, requesting him at the same time to excommunicate the Empress Irene and her son.

Adrian, however, excused himself from launching spiritual thunders on the score of image-worship, making the King at the same time aware of the true bearing of the misinterpreted passage. But he insinuated he would condemn the Empress Irene and her son as "heretics, unless they would consent to restore certain lands which belonged to the Church"—at the same time alluding to plans which he, the Pontiff, had formed for the "Exaltation of the Latin Church, and of the Monarchy of France." The exaltation of the Monarchy was indeed nigh; but Adrian did not live to be the instrument of it.

A high game was now about to be played, in which the Tiara and the Crown figured together, and thence-

forth these two tyrannical powers, firmly constituted, play into each other's hands. Leo III., who succeeded Adrian I. on the throne of St. Peter, sent the Standard of Rome to Charlemagne, requesting him to send some person "to receive the oaths of fidelity from the Romans."

But in those stormy times, no power, or personage was respected by the gusts of individual or party passion. Three years after the election of the new Pope, two relations of the late Pontiff, Pascal and Campule, not only offered themselves as accusers of Leo, but they attacked and severely wounded him in the public streets. He however escaped from them, by the aid of his friends, and the Duke of Spoleto (general of the French forces) sent him, strongly escorted, to the Court of Charles. The latter received him most cordially, sent him back with a large retinue, and went to Italy in person "to do him justice."

At Rome the King passed six days in private conferences with the Pontiff. He then convoked an Assembly of bishops and nobles to examine the grounds of accusation brought against Leo III, A.D. 800. The absolutism of the Roman See here rebelled against interference. "The Apostolic See," exclaimed the prelates, "cannot be judged by man." Leo, however, spoke of the accusations, and smoothed difficulties by affirming that the "King came to know the cause." No proof appearing against the Pontiff, he purged himself on oath, and soon after showed his gratitude to Charles. On the following Christmas day, A.D. 800, as the King assisted at the performance of mass at St. Peter's, whilst lights were flaming on the altars, and incense rose in clouds, amidst the mysteries and pomp of the Roman ritual, the Supreme Pontiff advanced towards the Sovereign and placed the Imperial crown on his brow, whilst the people shouted "Long life and victory to Charles Augustus, crowned by the hand of God! Long life to the great and pious Emperor of the Romans."

Amidst this universal excitement and exultation, the Pope conducted the new Emperor to a splendid throne,

and offered him those honours which his predecessors had been used to accord to the Emperor of Rome.

He declared that the simple title of "Patrician" should henceforth be exchanged for that of Emperor and Augustus. He then invested him with the Imperial mantle; and, thus attired, the Emperor Charlemagne returned to his palace, accompanied by the acclamations of the crowd.

Such was the foundation on which the German Emperors ever afterwards rested their pretensions over the Roman Empire. From that date, A.D. 800, these superb claims to the sovereignty of Italy were never foregone, until the year 1866; and for centuries a kind of half-recognised feudal suzerainty not only was claimed, but was really exercised over the greatest part of the Peninsula.

The era of Charlemagne is the only moment of mediæval history, in which a semblance of supremacy over the spiritual and temporal interests of mankind, appears to us as being united under one sceptre.

Charlemagne died at Aix-la-Chapelle in the seventy-second year of his age, January, 714, after a reign of forty-five years of unceasing territorial aggrandisement, political institutions, and literary foundations. We have no record of any other reign prolonged to the same extent, and employed to the last so fully with state cares. The genius of this great man impressed itself indelibly on the rudeness of his age. It may be added that by his genius also, his very crimes, his ferocious and cold-blooded assassinations, were made of use to his realms. With him expired the glory of that mighty monarchy which owned his sway; it extended over the entire territory of France, the greater part of Germany, the greater part of Spain, the Low Countries, and the Peninsula of Italy as far as Benevento.

When we look back to this great era, and sift with care the real benefits to society which survived the superficial glories of military conquest, we cannot but recognise the seeds of some permanent improvements over the chaotic

barbarism that preceded it. At this time, although feudal tyranny retained many of its worst features, yet, on the whole, it was tempered, modified, and reduced to a "legal system." It will be remembered that when the Goth, Theodoric, conquered Italy, he allowed the Theodosian code of Roman jurisprudence to remain in activity. To this succeeded the code of Justinian, but this was set aside by the Lombards, who execrated Greek influences and Greek law. The Longobards substituted their own rude laws over those portions of Italy subject to their authority. The laws and usages of the various conquerors, collected under the title of "The Edict" increased in time to a body of jurisprudence which governed many parts of Italy. When, as we have seen, the greater part of the Peninsula fell under the dominion of Charlemagne, many settlers came from France and Germany, who claimed the privilege of being ruled according to their native usages. Hence the "Loi Salique," the "Ripuarian," the "Bavarian," the "Alamanni" laws, were all variously and simultaneously brought into action with the Roman and Lombard codes. Subsequently, at a more advanced period, juriconsults were nominally bound in several cities to study each of these respective codes. With regard to that of Justinian (of which a copy was discovered at Amalfi at a later period), lawyers made use of a compendium, in which the whole Roman jurisprudence was reduced to a few simple points—all the rest was left to the barbarian law and to "the equity of the judge."

In Italy general laws were seldom or never passed by the mere caprice of one man, however powerful as a conqueror. They were proposed, debated, and settled in a Diet of spiritual and temporal peers, and of the chief commanders of the army. This Diet, under the Longobards, was held at Pavia on the 1st of March. That of the Goths was summoned near Piacenza. Under the Franks two classes of laws governed the country, and from these many of a modern kind were derived. There was the *special code* of each people, regulating contracts,

the succession of property, and the punishment of crime ; and secondly, the *general laws*, which affected impartially the whole community. Every individual was allowed to select the law under which he preferred to be governed. The clergy of all nations unanimously chose the Roman law, which they modified to their own use, and hence arose their pretensions to exemptions from the authority of secular courts.¹

Over and above all common codes, the usages of feudality practically ruled the great nobles and the more powerful gentry ; and to the overbearing tyranny of these, and their contempt for their inferiors, arose the great number of wealthy and powerful towns, which, at a very early period of mediæval history of Italy, acquired such remarkable influence, and which render its annals so different from those of other countries. The inhabitants of the rural districts, plundered and oppressed by feudal usages, and unable to obtain redress by appeal to "laws," which were considered by the great feudal lords as only framed for "small folk," retreated not only to the great towns, but to those lesser burghs, or "*borghi*," which were strongly fortified, and where the intercourse between man and man was on more equal terms ; whilst disputes were settled by the travelling justices, or "*Sca-bini*," who were instituted first by Charlemagne, upon the wise principle that a judge of reputation would be less likely to be under the influence of local prejudice, fear, or corruption, than any legist native of the spot. In principle, this has been carried down even to our own day.

During the reign of Charlemagne the necessity of regulating military service became of the most urgent nature ; and he it was who first established throughout his domains a definite military rule. Every proprietor of allodial lands or benefices was compelled to afford the state his services in the field. The lord of three or more manors was bound to render personal service ; men of more restricted property were to unite and send forth

¹ Muratori, *Ant. Ital. Dissert.* xxii.

one fully equipped, both with armour and horse. Thus every three manors were reckoned to furnish forth one horseman, with horse and accoutrements. Freemen of still smaller means, such as only held lands of six soldi in value, were to join others similarly circumstanced, to the number of six; and they were to send one armed footman to the field. Charlemagne enforced strictly these military statutes. His capitulars for the "Missi dominici" for the year 812 regulated military service in every detail. Ecclesiastic, no less than allodial, property and benefices of all kinds were included in these laws. As, however, it had been too much the custom in those rude and sanguinary times for churchmen to doff the gown and take up the sword and armour, rendering personal service like laymen, as chiefs of manorial tenements and domains, Charlemagne issued a decree in 803 with the intention of abolishing this scandal. He prohibited the great ecclesiastical dignitaries and the abbots of the chief monasteries to absent themselves from their duties on pretext of military service. But they were to furnish their contingent of well-equipped men, and the Emperor reserved to himself the right of naming the commander. The prelates naturally felt the rebuke with much displeasure, and murmured at what they considered an infringement of their rights and baronial dignity. But Charlemagne ascribed as his reason for the edict the necessity he felt for re-establishing among high Churchmen "due respect for ecclesiastical functions."

Under the successors of Charlemagne, grants for exemption from military service were sought and obtained by many abbacies. It is most true, however (and characteristic of the times) that throughout the Middle Ages, and in the local histories of many Italian commonwealths, examples of warlike high Churchmen are continually to be met with. They rode to the field armed with spiked steel clubs; respecting thus the letter of the New Testament against the use of the sword, whilst violating its spirit, with the unconcern that marked the barbarous state of public feeling. These

prelates, as may well be imagined, uniting to personal intrepidity the advantages of a far higher education and more enlarged intellectual faculties than the lay barons, took the lead, with the greatest success, alike in attack and in defence: and their valuable services contributed to make the public long indulgent to their irregular assumption of lay functions.

The laws enforcing military service were rigorously observed until the accession of Charles the Bald, when a considerable relaxation was allowed. It was then enacted that the entire body of freemen could only be summoned in arms on such occasions as the defence of the country required, when *all freemen*, under the title of *land-wehr*, were called upon to march for the service of the state.

But to return to the era of Charlemagne, we shall find its action preponderate over the western world under a threefold aspect. Pepin had laid the foundation of the temporal power of the Church, and Charlemagne had confirmed, consolidated, and increased it, on the solemn occasion of his consecration as Emperor at Rome; each of these two great powers, therefore, acquired increased dignity, power, and public veneration. The Pontiffs of Rome had theoretically founded their pretensions to the high dominion of the Latin Church on our Saviour's charge to Peter, "*Quidquid ligaveris super terram, erit ligatum et in Cœlis; quidquid solveris super terram erit solutum et in Cœlis.*" The fact of the Pope conferring the Imperial dignity on Charlemagne, brought the fact of this authority before the world in a more direct and impressive form than had yet been felt. The solidarity established between the Crown and the Tiara confirmed this authority, creating, at the same time, obligatory duties in each, and positive rights. From this period, therefore, the pretensions of Rome began to rise, though the formula of spiritual supremacy had not yet been pronounced. But a new order of events was initiated; and the traditions and grandeur of the "Imperial Majesty of Rome" were again awakened from the ruins of the Eternal City!

In this remarkable era also there arose amidst the

clash of Teutonic arms, and in the blaze of military glory, a new ideal, which was soon accepted by the warlike classes throughout Europe.

The noble individuality of the Teutonic race, which ascribes the loftiest virtues to its heroes, created an entirely new form of composition in literature. The reverence for the female sex, which the Germans had always been remarkable for, now came prominently forward. Beautiful and virtuous ladies were chanted as the heroines of all warlike lays, inspiring the heroic deeds of the most valiant and accomplished warriors. So fascinating did these lays and tales in verse prove, that the fashion was improved into the composition of those romances, many of which have been preserved. Exalted virtues, wild adventures, combats with sorcerers, fiends, infidels, and the triumphs of true faith and true love, form the basis of all these romances; and amidst their necessarily monotonous tenor, we come perpetually on scenes which may be called the sublime of the picturesque; on remarks which are startling from their shrewd practical knowledge of human nature; and on passages of a lofty pathos which has never been surpassed. The comparative absence of the passions of selfishness and avarice in these romances, in an age when circumstances favoured so highly the indulgence of both, is a feature in them which cannot but strike the reader. And the universal popularity of works appealing to a state of "ideal perfection," is one of the most unanswerable proofs of the unsuspected amount of latent virtue in the souls of those northern nations, commonly styled "barbarian." Their effect was incalculably great in awakening mankind from the gratification of the merely animal enjoyments, by the charm of music and verse, to the vibration of the finer chords of human sympathies.

The Greeks had indeed vested the passion of love with all the force of a "Deity" pre-ordained (as Eros or Anteros) to influence mankind inexorably. But in the Teutonic ideal it assumed a nobler character: it was

described as the tutelary genius, the guardian, and the reward of manly virtues and of religion, and as the lamp which shone on the inviolate sanctity of the domestic hearth.

Accordingly, from this date we find the private or domestic life gradually rising in importance; and notice (even in the scanty annals that survive to us) the purifying effect which the Teutonic ideal has had over modern civilization, an ideal which, though now divested of the graceful forms of the exuberant and poetic fancy which framed the romantic fables of chivalry, is not the less active in these our own days.

It may, therefore, in conclusion, be repeated that the great military career of Charlemagne is the least part of his wonderful epoch, upon which our attention concentrates itself. His long reign was the turning point of the old society, as it merged into the new; as the western world became subjected to a more wholly European influence, and ceased to be half Asiatic.

CHAPTER V.

The Eastern Empire—Byzantium and Byzantine Society—Arabian Civilization, Literature, and Influences.

PART I.

WHILST the Western Empire was becoming regenerate under new and more manly impulses, the vices, sins, and corruptions of the olden world, together with luxury, taste, and splendour, had taken refuge on the shores of the Bosphorus.

Constantinople at this time gave the fashion in dress and manners; youths of high parentage were sent there to acquire learning, polish, and the ways of life. The most beautiful slaves of both sexes were brought to its mart; and every choicest commodity, whether of nature or of art, found the best market there.

On one hand, Eastern splendour and Imperial magnificence, which encouraged all that was subservient to luxury and most finished in art; on the other, literary culture, fervid faith to the *first forms of Christianity*, and the keen interest of all classes in religious controversy, gave a general appearance of cultivation strongly in contrast with those otherwise rude times.

The Emperor Justinian had set the example of mootings theological discussions with grey-bearded divines; and all ranks of society had eagerly followed his lead. Religious controversy, disputes on abstruse points of Church discipline, and theological arguments formed the theme of universal discussion; and never did hatreds and quarrels on other moot points run higher.

The Manichæan heresy had, about the middle of the seventh century, introduced itself as a brand within the volcanic atmosphere of Constantinople. This sect, which endeavoured to reconcile the doctrines of Christ and

of Zoroaster, became the great object of persecution in the East, and subsequently in the Western world.

The apostle of this sect, Constantine Sylvanus, a native of Samosata in Syria, had alighted on the topic which gave rise to such bitter schisms, by apparent chance. He had received a copy of the New Testament from a deacon, who, returning from captivity about the year 660, was hospitably entertained at his house.

This gift became his only study; and the "Epistles of St. Paul" the object of his most profound attention.

Constantine and his companions assumed the names of the followers of the Apostle; and the appellations of the primitive Church were revived amongst the congregations they established in Armenia and in Cappadocia.

These sectarians, sometimes called Paulicians, sometimes Manichæans (as they had adopted many of the doctrines of that heresy), employed themselves with the study of Christianity at its fountain head. They acknowledged two creative principles in the universe, an evil and a good. To the former belonged the visible world—to the latter, the superior or eternal. Visions were condemned by most of the Manichæans; they believed in the eternity of spirit and of matter; they drew a strong line of demarcation between the Old and the New Testaments—the former being, they imagined, the record of the Spirit of Evil; the latter, of the Spirit of Grace.

They could not reconcile the crimes, the bloodshed, the iniquities narrated in the Old Testament, and committed by the Jews, as the "People of God," with the doctrine of *Divine Benevolence*; nor could they succeed in tracing the idealism of the Christian dispensation in the ferocious, stiff-necked intolerance of the Jewish law. They could recognize no traces in the latter, for the foundation of the lofty moral purity, and all-embracing charity of the religion of Christ.

They excluded images, pictures, relics, and the "mediation of saints" from their faith; and looked for light in the Gospel and its simple rule.

Believing in the rationality of the Christian dispensa-

tion, they applied the faculty of reason to the study of Scripture, admitting allegory as an aid to exposition.

They admitted the Spiritual Advent of our Lord, but denied his Incarnation. The Crucifixion was to them an "unreal representation" to deceive the Jews. The mother of Christ they believed to be a simple woman; man in general, angels fallen from their pristine glory; but who would, in due time, resume their dignity.

These Paulicians, under Constantine, formed a society known as Fellow Pilgrims; they incorporated in theirs many of the Gnostic and Manichæan doctrines, and attached to themselves, in Cappadocia and Pontus, the remnants of these sects, to whom were added Catholics on one hand, and the followers of Zoroaster on the other.

Constantine fell a martyr to Greek persecution; and was stoned to death by a weak disciple at the price of his own pardon. But, as persecution continued, the numbers of this sect increased; and in one short reign, one hundred thousand men are said to have been sacrificed to the fierce intolerance of the times.

The subject of religious controversy formed, indeed, the sole tie of deep and fervent interest that bound the population of Constantinople in one common passion. "Ask a man to give you small change," says St. Gregory of Nazianzus, "he will, instead of complying, tell you the difference between the Godhead of the Father and the Son. Demand the price of bread from another man, you will be told 'the Son is inferior to the Father.' Inquire if your bath be prepared, and you will be informed that 'the Son was created before all worlds, and antecedent to space and time.'"

Murders and assassinations often closed or followed religious disputes; and that respecting the chanting of the "*Trisagion*"—one party holding to the simple chant, the other to a more varied form of composition—would bring the contending choristers in battle array in the same cathedral, where they would exchange blows in presence of dismayed congregations of worshippers!

The excitement on the moot point of religious controversy reached its height under Leo the Isaurian. The monks of the Grecian archipelago equipped a fleet against the Emperor, in defence of their favourite images which he persecuted.

Whilst the Emperors were employed in theological discussions, the courtiers and nobles, and down to the very dregs of the people, followed, as we have seen, their example. But whilst they kept fasts with extreme diligence, and followed the minutiae of the religious ceremonial with unerring precision, they gave themselves up to every species of crime and licentious indulgence.

No trace of practical morality, whether Christian or heathen, can be traced in the fury of abstract speculations. The noble virtues and exemplary lives of the great orthodox divines shone, in simple lustre, and unequalled glory, in the midst of a society both frivolous and corrupt. All, however, in this peculiar society knew by heart, and could answer without an error, the most complicated questions of the Church Catechism, could repeat the "Symbols of the Faith" in protest against heresy, and could vehemently invoke *anathema* on the heads of those who differed from them; and, at the same time, retained the craving for brutal excitement, and the violation of every appearance of modesty, which had disgraced heathen Rome.

After the Manichæan error had been extirpated at the cost of thousands of lives, the courtiers and ladies, joining in a chorus of praise of the Emperor and Empress who had commanded the persecution, would exclaim with renewed energy, "Long life to the Emperor and Empress! Death to the Manichæans! May their bones be scattered to the wind and rot!"¹ Anathema to their Apostle Severus! a second Judas! enemy of the Holy Trinity! Out with the Manichæans!" And this same population, with the zealous cries of orthodoxy on their lips, would

¹ The Greek Church entertains so high a respect for the bones of the dead, that desecration of the latter has always been regarded by its votaries as the most heinous act of vengeance it is possible to inflict on its enemies.

crowd to the barbarous and ferocious circus, where women (sometimes utterly devoid of clothing) performed the most revolting parts, amidst the applauses of the audience. It would sometimes happen that one of these degraded and public mimes (as the Empress Theodora, daughter of a bear-keeper of the circus) would rise to the throne of the Empire, after having been a public performer of this nature in the face of the entire capital ! ?

A frantic interest in chariot racing was also a favourite pursuit amongst the higher orders ; drawing down not unfrequently horrible acts of vindictive barbarity on the victors from the losers. The “jeunesse dorée” of the epoch wore the “colours” of their charioteers, and betted heavily and loudly on the respective “reds and blues,” whom they favoured ; poniards were often concealed under baskets of flowers, and the assassination of a fortunate rival often sullied the termination of the games.

Crowds, ever eager after bloody excitement, thronged joyfully to the amphitheatre, where condemned criminals were delivered up to the jaws of wild beasts, after the fashion of Rome.

Soaring majestically above this fitful and motley crowd, the city of Constantinople arose in queenly beauty, emerging from the waters of the Bosphorus in a radiant and lovely atmosphere of azure light. Gorgeous taste, architectural grace, Roman grandeur, all were found mingled and blended in her walls.

If we examine the records left of Constantinople, as she stood ere devastated by Christian bands with unprecedented greed during the Crusades, we shall find it to have been enriched by the treasures of Imperial Rome, of the Oriental world, and by those of all the cultivated and wealthy provinces—Calabria, Sicily, the coast of Naples, Dalmatia, and Venice, which, with the whole of Greece, Macedonia, Epirus, Thessaly, Thrace, and Illyrium, were left under the sceptre of the Eastern Emperors, by a treaty concluded between Charlemagne and Nicephorus. Eastern fancy, Imperial magnificence, Hellenic

elegance, united in adorning the streets and thoroughfares of the great mart of the world's commerce, and in supplying the tastes and wants of the countless thousands that thronged her forums, palaces, and amphitheatres, or worshipped beneath her golden domes.

A circuit of lofty bastioned and crenellated walls, very similar to those of Rome, girded the Imperial city; long lines of porticoes, supported by elegant colonnades, intersected it; eleven forums and twenty-four vast thermæ adorned it. Churches and monuments of every dimension offered an attractive and harmonious picture to the eye, every beautiful detail being enshrined in the dome of the peerless southern heavens. Here, as from their last resting place, the disinherited gods of Greece stood in serene undying majesty and grace. As pearls contrast with more gaudy jewellery, so stood in marble purity and loveliness Cytherea, the scornful yet unrivalled Apollo, the majestic Juno, the pensive Muses, the noble Graces; or, descending to a lower form of life, the sportive nymphs, the joyous fauns, the laughing satyrs, were met with, whose bright forms, exulting unchecked, in the first bright dawn of life, were found bounding in the vintage dance; adorned with the graceful emblems of festive season, with flowers and vines. Contrasting with these Hellenic treasures of pure white marble, pillars of huge dimensions and of sombre hue towered in the clear atmosphere, crowned with colossal statues of the athletes who had deserved honours at the Olympian games; and a series of Imperial busts were seen, forming decorations to thermæ and amphitheatres, in honour of the Imperial lord.

This homage was a feature in Byzantine civilization derived from the older idolatrous worship of the "Imperial form." Thus, amongst the most gigantic and splendid monuments we read of in the city, was the colossal statue of Justinian, rising seventy cubits high above the ground, with a fair fountain playing at its feet; and again, the equestrian statue of the Emperor Theodosius, of gilded silver, rising in burnished splendour on a grand column,

sculptured with beautiful bassi-relievi, and enriched with the rarest marbles.

Contrast and singularity brought their mingled characteristics to the adornment of Constantinople. Few sights can be imagined more beautiful than the bright hues of the attire of the motley throng, overflowing the streets of the town. Courtiers and ladies, the latter trailing their elegant robes and embroidered veils of Eastern fabric, paced under the stately porticoes in a continuous stream. Bazaars, shops, markets presented in their mingled wares, and strange variety of customers, a curious and animated spectacle; buyers and sellers shrieking aloud in altercation for the prices of the veriest trifles, or for the most costly treasures, with the same vociferations.

The poorer inhabitants found shelter at night in squalid and insecure timber erections, in a quarter removed from the golden and marble palaces. Hounds roamed masterless at will, cleansing the city of offal during the night, and sharing the privileges of sunshine and air with domestic animals of the meanest kind.

The amphitheatre, which was the chief attraction for all ranks, had consecutive and elevated tiers of seats, encircling the whole area, and these were always filled with a mass of densely-packed spectators, shouting and calling forth bets, imprecations, hopes, fears, and all the emotions of their tumultuous excitement, with unrestrained uproar. When the immense crowd swayed to and fro under some ungoverned impulse, the surpassing richness and brilliancy of the attires gave the mass, when seen from above, the appearance of a vast field of wild flowers swaying under the spring-tide breezes.

Contiguous to the amphitheatre, where the gambols of the wild beasts were displayed, stood a host of pillars, each bearing the effigy of some strange wild or fanciful object, whether created by nature or by the mind of man, in his moments of imaginative gloom. These monstrous or mimic forms were displayed as a part of the "programme" of the sports.

On some of the great columns were seen effigies of

Scylla and Charybdis, of sphynxes and chimeras; on others, gigantic serpents wreathed their coils in bronze. The emblems of ancient peoples, weird, strange, monstrous creatures, stood there in mimic life, introducing the spectators to the wild games of the animals within.

The presence of the latter, indeed, formed the principal object of attraction to the populace. Lions, tigers, panthers, and wild asses, with bears and hyænas, were let loose on one another, the confused but continual roar of the maddened mass, tearing each other to pieces, forming the supreme delight of the crowd.

On very solemn religious festivals—as, for example, Christmas—the Emperor was seen in the principal amphitheatre, raised on a lofty throne, supported by twenty-four marble columns. Amidst the applause of the spectators, he gave the signal for the commencement of the games. The presence of the Emperor was always greatly desired, and the Imperial master was an object of semi-idolatry amongst the otherwise fickle inhabitants of Constantinople; and it is remarkable that though the Eastern Empire was often contracted by foreign conquest, and often changed Emperors (who were sometimes sullied by every crime), yet the subjects were always *united* in fealty to the sovereign who swayed the sceptre for the time being—thus affording the strongest possible contrast to the continuous fluctuations of the Western world.

The Imperial Palace of Constantinople was copied from that of the Caliphs of Bagdad, by order of the Emperor Theodosius; the throne-room especially was the delight and wonder of the age. Within the atrium, at the foot of the staircase leading to this celebrated hall, two colossal gilt lions, crouching on the pavement, roared a clamorous welcome to the alighting guests. The latter, after mounting the noble stairs, passed through a double file of courtiers, sumptuously attired, to wait upon their Imperial master, intent on watching his summons, and measuring dress, language, manners, and movements upon the exact meter of court etiquette.

The whole complicated *code* of “court ceremonial”

was carefully transcribed by the Emperor's *own hand*, and observed even to the minutest particular by the obsequious throng of favourites and sycophants.

The throne-room itself was a fairy-like scene of elegance and brilliancy. In its midst a golden tree, with mimic branches and fruit, studded with mimic golden birds, surprised and delighted the beholders, whilst the ear was greeted by the many different songs of those very birds, marvellously imitating those of living warblers.

As the guests advanced towards the Imperial throne the Emperor, whose refulgent presence formed the chief object of admiration, was drawn upwards towards the ceiling, and whilst the *three prostrations* ordered by etiquette were performed, and all brows were laid on the marble pavement, he was robed afresh, with still costlier garments, and reappeared to the astonished gaze one complete mass of jewellery and gold. His buskins were of the royal purple, studded thickly with the finest pearls; his heavy ample cloth of gold robe blazed with gems; his lofty Persian tiara, surmounted with a globe and cross, glittered with large diamonds, and was fastened to the face by a double row of fine pearls, whilst (in strange defiance to the laws of taste) small rows of false curls, after the Roman fashion, peeped from under this splendour, setting closely to the temples, and aiding, with the painted face, in transforming the Imperial person into a sort of hybrid between a mummy and an effigy.

We shall now leave Imperial ceremonial, and the hideous amusements of the Pagan world, the carnal minded though polished crowd, so often wanting in every Christian virtue, and we shall turn to that quarter in which one of the noblest Christian churches extant stood in its original grandeur and beauty.

The Church of Saint Sophia, designed by the genius of Anthemius of Thrales, rises with majestic and golden domes, with unfading beauty, in the lovely atmosphere of Constantinople. Beyond the grand central dome, east and west, are two semi-domes of equal dimensions, and these are again cut into two, by two still smaller ones.

The base of the principal dome is pierced by forty small apertures, so small and so low as not to interfere with the apparent construction, but affording a mellow, harmonious light throughout the whole edifice. All the pillars are of porphyry, verd antique, and marbles of the most precious kinds; the capitals are among the most admirable specimens of the Byzantine style. The governing line of a classical Corinthian capital is a hollow curve, to which acanthus leaves or other projecting ornaments are affixed. In Saint Sophia we find the curves reversed, and the ornaments are simply incised. In the lower tier of arches the incision on the marble is allowed to tell its own story, and does so with exquisite effect. In the upper tier, further removed from the eye, the interstices are filled in with black marble so as to ensure the desired effect.¹

All the flat surfaces throughout the church are covered with a rich mosaic of marble slabs of the most varied patterns and colours. The domes, roofs, and carved surfaces are covered with mosaic on a gold ground, relieved by grand devotional figures, and adorned with every variety of architectural device.

The whole effect is solemnly impressive and beautiful. Gorgeous colour and variety, subdued by the dim light, are its principal characteristics. An exquisite tabernacle of solid gold, worked into minutest fret-work, and studded with jewels, stood on a silver altar of massive metal, the whole encircled by an elegant balustrade of small columns, composed of jasper, porphyry, and verd antique; other columns were of gilded bronze, with pure gold capitals: the columns are still extant. This wondrous balustrade was enriched by the most precious marbles and jasper; deep rose, purple streaked with yellow, orange, red, or soft primrose; it was one of the chief wonders of the church.

Gold vases, incrustated with glittering jewels, stood on appropriate pedestals, about and near the altar.

Enormous vases of other precious materials were to be seen, all miracles of the sculptor and goldsmith's art;

¹ History of Architecture. Fergusson. Santa Sophia, Vol. ii., p. 314.

the whole scene was one never equalled in gorgeous, and yet subdued sublimity ; fitting the spirit of the worshipper to a silent awe on crossing the portals of gilded and carved cedar.

Sacked and plundered of its vast treasures, desecrated and defiled, the church of Saint Sophia stands even now as one of the finest edifices in the world.

Thus stood Constantinople, and such were its inhabitants, at the time of our present narrative.

PART II.

ABANDONING the Eastern Empire and its capital, we must now turn to still more Oriental regions, where the wondrous sights that greet the eye seem to mock the imaginations of the poets of a colder sky ; and where the tide of life, ever bright with the hues of love and youth, contributed in after times to irrigate our own fields of thought.

The brilliant and fanciful civilization of the Arabians differed in every respect from any of which records exist. Although the graver and exact sciences reached to a high proficiency among the Arabs, as we shall afterwards have occasion to see, the prevailing tone of life, manners, and literature was a fervid and graceful realism, which found a natural expression in the pathetic and tender tales and lays still extant ; in the bewitching caprices of a fantastic architecture (borrowed originally from Byzantium and still more ancient rudiments), in pure and abundant fountains ; and in the songs of birds, the fragrance of flowers, and the perfumes lavished by even the deserts, from balsams denied to other climes.

The passion which inspires first all poetry and all fiction, but which becomes in Northern nations a spiritual tormentor, is constantly found in Arabian and Persian literature, as the all-engrossing occupation of youth, to the exclusion of any sterner or more grave pursuit. We seem to behold the lovely forms, the lustrous eyes, the frank, spontaneous emotions of the youthful heart. Byron

has aptly described in his portrait of Haidee and Juan the manners and feelings of the East :—

“Love was born *with* them, *in* them, so intense,
It was their very being—not a sense.”

Over the minds and imaginations of these susceptible races arose a great prophet, conqueror, and ruler, who brought in a new creed, for which all yearned, uniting the wild fancy, the domestic habits, and the brilliant military glory which distinguished the epoch, under the severity and solemnity of the purely monotheistic form of divine worship.

With much in common with all Asiatic natives, the Mahomedans were raised far above, and distinctly severed from them, by an abhorrent contempt and rejection of idols.

When, like a piercing sword, the course of the conqueror had cut indelibly into the heart of society, its impress was deeply imbedded in it, through two fundamental instincts akin to man. On the one hand, vast promises of dominion served to gratify the cravings of earthly vanity and cupidity in the soldiers who followed the footsteps of the prophet; and on the other, an eternal paradise of sensuous delights was to be the portion of the believer who fell in the good fight.

It is difficult to imagine a creed more fitted to satisfy Eastern populations. The permission of indulgence of feelings lingering in the human heart; the sanctifying these by direct mission from on high; the effacing of scruples that disquieted the conscience; the simplicity of the domestic duties; the moral “directness” of the laws regulating the intercourse between man and man; the reverence for age; the injunctions for charity; the toleration of odious and loathsome diseases in the indigent; all these clear, practical duties inculcated without evasion or ambiguity, and all enforced as the direct commands of the Almighty, spoke at once to millions, distracted between decaying polytheism, and a multitude of contradictory and unintelligible semi-Jewish sects, appealing most powerfully to the natural and better sentiments of man. And no religion has yet

appeared, that at first carried all before it, with the triumphant burst of that of which the camel-driver of Mecca was the founder.

Even to this day Christian missions in Central Africa have failed to produce any sensible effect; whilst whole provinces frequently and spontaneously adopt the Mahomedan faith.

The civilization thus initiated may be called "Arabo-Asiatic." Neither in its artistical, architectural, nor literary expression did it ever rise to the grand lineal simplicity of the antique. Its characteristics were indeed diametrically opposed to the latter; the playful exuberance of an endless variety of fancies and of imagination distinguished all the efforts of their imitative genius.

The eloquent and yet sober lessons, and the voices of the Hellenic historians, and the grand dramas of their poets, seem to have been lost upon the Arabs, but they eagerly seized upon the subtleties of the Hellenic philosophers. That philosophy, to the fascinations of which Agricola, in early manhood, felt disposed to yield "more than became a Roman and a senator," and from pursuing which too far his prudent mother restrained him, offered irresistible fascinations to the studious, under a more fervid clime, and under the cool darkened halls and mosaic domes of Damascus and Bagdad.

In dialectics and metaphysics they were guided by Aristotle nominally; but often rendered the clear reason of his text obscure, by subtilizing and seeking definitions for every word. Guided by the precepts and discoveries of the ancients, they also applied themselves to the study of geometry, astronomy, and medicine, in which three latter branches of knowledge they made many improvements.

The schools established in the East, for teaching and cultivating science, soon rose high in repute. These habits of thought and education spread with the Mahomedan conquest throughout Asia and Spain. Many of the schools instituted in the latter country rose to fame, especially the University of Cordova.¹ The latter main-

¹ Bruckerus. *Histor. Philos.* V., iii., p. 681.

tained its superiority when the Western world was still immersed in comparative darkness. It was through the Arabian translations of the works of Aristotle, that the first knowledge of the philosophy of the ancients was conveyed to mediæval Europe.

During the reign of Charlemagne, at the commencement of the Middle Ages, the Abassides, who had ascended the throne of Mahomet, and had transferred the seat of empire from Damascus to Cufa, and afterwards to Bagdad, gave the example of this brilliant civilization. In the latter city the sciences and arts received special encouragement from the great Caliph Almansour, one of the most enlightened men of his time. His son Al-Mohdi, and his celebrated grandson Al-Rashid, followed in the footsteps of their illustrious predecessors. Bagdad, under the Caliph Al-Rashid, became the chosen centre of a most literary and intellectual life.

Men of exalted genius usually meet on a common ground of thought; thus a friendly intercourse existed between the Caliph Haroun Al-Rashid and the Emperor Charlemagne. The former even ceded the Holy Places to that potentate, in order to facilitate the performance of pilgrimages—a custom of immemorial antiquity in the East, but which had only been recently introduced in the West, where it became at once enthusiastically adopted.

In after days, when the Crusades and the commerce of Italy drew hundreds of thousands to the East, besides the more properly designated pilgrims of devotion, the civilization of Arabia and Byzantium (acting through direct intercourse) became ingrained with the pabulum of thought.

It is indubitable, that whether we consider the irruption of Mahomedanism as a conquest of one of the most extensive empires in the world by a small and comparatively unknown people, or as a religious doctrine which found a responsive echo throughout multitudes, its career surpassed in splendour and stability any other formerly known. Perhaps this may be attributed to the fact that the converted nations joined in the cause of their con-

querors with almost the same enthusiasm as its original founders. Persia, Syria, and Africa, in turn, sent forth auxiliaries to swell the tide of conquest, and to spread the new religion at the point of the sword to the remotest corners of the earth. Thus the impulse given from Arabia, a poor and thinly-peopled country, which, unaided, could not have furnished warriors for prolonged engagements, lighted a sympathetic spark amongst many Eastern nations. Each country, while accepting the new dogmas under conquest, retained, however, under a new form, its local anterior usages.

The Sabæan worship of the stars was common to Arabia, Persia, Chaldea, and the greatest part of the Babylonian Empire. The Jewish creed was diffused through Syria in a very degraded and corrupted form; and through parts of Arabia and Egypt, long before the time of Mahomet, had become to a great extent Arabian. Amongst all these nations the dogmas of Mahomedanism struck, as it were, a congenial chord, corresponding to a craving of the imagination and heart. But in Spain a system of extensive and flourishing colonisation was carried out; besides which, the existence of a Semitic race in the south of that country (descendants of the early Carthaginian settlers), accounts for the maintenance of Mahomedanism in that part of Spain long after it had been expelled from the Northern provinces, where no vestiges of a Semitic tribe can be traced.

So true it is that the transformation of the new converts was complete, and proceeded thoroughly from the convictions of heart and conscience, that we find the primitive "Arabian" impress always slight, and very soon effaced altogether. Each province retained the religion found congenial to its cravings, but else emancipated itself from the conqueror's yoke. Thus Persia, Syria, Egypt, Africa, and Spain soon became virtually independent states, yielding but a nominal fealty to the Grand Caliph, who claimed to be the rightful successor of the Prophet.

CHAPTER VI.

State of Western Europe after the death of Charlemagne — Alliance between the Church and Empire—Elective Supremacy granted to the German Emperor in the choice of the Roman Pontiff and Episcopal Clergy—Influence of Byzantium on the Southern Provinces of Italy and Venice.

AFTER a glance at the Byzantine Empire, eastern splendour, and Arabian civilization in its most brilliant phase of development, a return to Western Europe is necessary, where all order and government seemed to expire with Charlemagne, the great founder of both.

After the death of this great Conqueror, the immense Empire which had owned his sway dissolved into a chaotic mass, from which finally emerged those distinct "nationalities" which form modern Europe, and the limits and characteristics of which have varied but slightly from that period. These nations all adopted that phase of civilization which is universally known as the European (though in different degrees, and at different epochs), a civilization distinct from Oriental, as being that of unceasing change, and perpetual amelioration; in bold distinctness from the immemorial barbarism of Africa, and of the dead stagnation of the Asiatic races.

Until this time the sentiment of nationality, properly so called, had not existed save in the Hellenes, and the citizens of Rome, when Rome exulted in her early career of glory. A feebler, and, so to say, a spurious nationality had been also encouraged by the Romans, when they admitted to the citizenship of Rome the inhabitants of the cities they conquered. But the tie which binds mankind to the land of their birth by the common interests, aspirations, feelings, family ties, language and religion of one race, dwelling on the same hearth as their fathers, and on the soil of one mother country, could not

be distinctly evolved in the new society, amongst the Barbarians, in the wanderings of a nomad tribe, half herdsmen and half warriors.

The northern tribes poured on the south of Europe merely from motives of material advantage, to find more plentiful subsistence, a less inclement sky, fertile fields easily cultivated, and delicious wines and fruits, unknown to their very legends of Paradise! When these northmen beheld a large cultivated rose-tree in full bloom, they knelt down and worshipped it, supposing the "god of fire" made his abode in a thing of such unimagined beauty and fragrance.

These Barbarians brought with them the fierce and domineering individuality of the warrior, to overawe the feebler, and more sociable races of the enervated Peninsula. But once the torrent of conquest had passed by, the subtlety of the civilized man neutralised, in a great degree, the rude force of the savage, and the *native element* resumed its preponderance, in the cities especially; except in the higher "lordships" of the land, the executive, and in finance. These important privileges of conquest, the victors never seem to have resigned formally, until the Italian cities ransomed their independence; in many cases at a heavy cost.

It may be said that to the Latin, the Greek, and to the Frank elements, added to the Byzantian-Italian, we owe modern life and our present civilization. Between Western Europe and the great cradle of mankind, Asia, there lay, indeed, vast tracts—Muscovy proper, the provinces of the Danube, and the greater part of Hungary; but these added little to mediæval or modern civilization, whilst they were at an equal distance from that of the East. With the downfall of the Carlovingian dynasty society broke up, and seemed to gather round distinct centres. On one side were governors, chiefs, feudal barons, and finally kings (nominal as their authority but too often was); on the other were the subject populations, vassals and serfs. We begin at this time to perceive amongst the latter, that spontaneous feeling of respect and attachment to supe-

riors which is known by the word clanship. During this period also, the savage passions and avarice of the feudal lords made sad havoc on the properties and lives of the monastic orders, as we learn from the chronicles of the great abbeys of all countries of Europe. The latter, however, are silent on the important point, that it was frequently less as the *ministers of religion* than as *feudal and territorial rivals* (in all secular rule, privileges, and gains), that the enmity of the barons was incurred.

After the deposition of Charles le Gros, and the cessation of pure Austrasian influence, the Gallo-Franks elected Eude, or Ode, to the throne (January, 889), and when, nearly one hundred years subsequently, in 987, the Capets assumed the reins of government, the Franks and Gauls became finally united in a kingdom which has, since then, always borne the name of France.

These races thus blended, and the adventurous and chivalrous but vague spirit of the north, corrected by the lively cultivated brilliant prompt nature of the Romano-Gauls, produced, in another century, that novel and attractive literary "revival" which had so much influence over society for the succeeding six hundred years, and the charm of which is not extinct in our own time.

At the time Eude was elected (January, 889), Swabia and Franconia were each governed by a different lord, and the Peninsula of Italy had also a separate and well-marked existence. Her part in civilization was henceforth to be quite as important, and at first, more decided than that of France, although of a different kind. The capacity for *organisation* may be said to have been the direct inheritance of Italy, from the traditions of its earlier times, so distinct from those of all nations, inasmuch as theirs were mostly savage, and those of Italy were, alas, but too glorious and too civilized. Something of the talent of command had passed, however, from Rome to each of the great municipalities of Italy.

Those interesting and remarkable cities (which stood, as it were, like bulwarks, in a chaos of ignorance and

darkness, so immeasurably superior were they to the rude ignorance of the feudal barons) the municipalities of Italy, added an intelligent appreciation of the triumphs of peace, of industry and the arts, which was peculiar to themselves. Within these favoured centres, especially in the southern provinces, a flourishing commerce with the East never ceased. They issued distinct codes of justice, and instituted series of laws expressly framed for the well ordering of mercantile and maritime communities. There is evidence to show that these codes were well enforced, and were considered by the Eastern rulers so just, that it was the rivalries of the Italian cities amongst each other, and no revolts on the part of the Eastern nations, that injured their trade, and circumscribed their prosperity in the Levant.

This ability for *government* (and for those larger perceptions of the advantages of, and moral claims to, strict justice, and observance of statute law) can hardly be sufficiently dwelt upon, in the forthcoming and most remarkable stage of Italian history; because they were not so much the fruits of experience and study, as similar codes are in our own time. They were frequently elaborated in the fiercest party contests; in the terrors of foreign barbarous invasions; and in the very midst of a comparatively barbarous state of public intelligence.

When this new stage of existence was first struggling into life, all the three great natural divisions of Italy—North, South, and Central—were the battle-fields of opposing races, as well as of opposite interests. The Milanese extreme northern provinces were being ravaged by a horde of Huns from Pannonia, of an appearance so hideous, as to make the legend intelligible which declared them to be the progeny of a “she-wolf and a demon.” The portrait of a man exactly bearing out this description, and wearing a barbarian crown, is (or was very lately) to be seen at Padua, in a most interesting ancient illuminated MSS. It is labelled, “*Attila, the Scourge of God.*” It is not probable that this interesting portrait should be of the period of Attila; but it is

invaluable as showing the outward appearance of those repulsive savages, which only want the extremities of the brute to realise the *sátyr* of mythology, and who carried terror and horror into Europe, till thoroughly vanquished by Otho of Germany, on the banks of the Seth, August, 955, A.D.

The Southern provinces of Italy were overrun at the same time by the Saracens, who had, since the close of the eighth century, been masters of Sicily. They now desolated the coasts of Apulia and Calabria, invited, strange to say, by the contending factions of Greeks and Lombards, already struggling for power in the territory of Benevento. These ferocious Saracenic auxiliaries came in hordes from Sicily and Crete, and devastated (with a systematic completeness and cruelty, until then unknown) the territories and cities they overran. The towns were often utterly destroyed, and the inhabitants butchered or carried away into slavery. A Neapolitan historian reckons "thirty-two maritime cities and twenty-five districts," which were thus effaced from history. Religious and superstitious aversion and horror on both sides, aggravated the anguish of the conquered, and the brutality and avarice of the conquerors.

The Saracens pushed their desolating raids to the banks of the Garigliano (near the ancient Minturnus), and even carried on expeditions with fire, slaughter, and pillage under the very walls of Rome; whilst two native Princes, Adalbertus and Beringarius, who both had pretensions to the crown of Italy, instead of liberating their country from these scourges, contended against one another, thus adding a source of misery and anguish to the many already existing.

Meantime, John XII., alarmed at the dissensions around, and jealous of the supremacy which a native Italian king could not fail to exercise, pursued the instinctive and natural policy of the Papacy in all ages. He invoked the conquest of Italy by a foreign ruler; this time it was not on France he called, but it was on Germany.—on the Emperor Otho I. He flattered himself

that the presence of an Imperial Suzerain would at once pacify the rivalries, and soften the passions of all factions.

Otho was flattered by the appeal of the Pontiff; he crossed the Alps, and almost at once subdued and conquered all opposition. Both of the rival candidates to the Italian crown were defeated, and Otho himself assumed the iron crown at Pavia, and the imperial diadem at Rome, from the hands of the Pope.

The Emperor in return swore to defend the Pontifical States, and to guard the person of the Pontiff from whatsoever attack might be made on him, and to oppose any and every infringement on his territory and rights.¹

But the Pontiff found the pacification of Italy less easy than he had anticipated. He had flattered himself that the Emperor of Germany, once invested with the brilliant but illusory rights of empire over Italy, would return to his northern fastnesses, and merely exercise a nominal control over his new provinces. Events speedily dispelled this dream, for Otho soon showed himself able and willing to exercise to their full extent all the privileges and powers conferred upon him; and the Pontiff was filled with alarm on beholding the firm and universal sway held by an able and powerful foreign master. He foresaw with deep and just alarm, the rivalry which the Imperial "governors" would soon exercise against the great prelates and episcopal clergy, who had till now exercised nearly undisputed ascendancy over the municipalities of the great cities and their adjacent townships; and he at last determined to aid the son of Beringarius to recover,

¹ The original text of this interesting and important compact is preserved in Baronius, *Annal. Eccl.*, an. 962. It is here subjoined:—"I shall elevate the Holy Apostolic Church and thou, who art its chief, with all my potency and might, neither allowing thy life nor thy honours to be threatened, nor wrested from thee, with, or through, my consent or counsel. Those dominions, now held by me, which formerly were thine, shall be restored to thee. I claim no direct mastery or dominion over Rome, nor shall I give judgment concerning the rights of its populations without previously consulting thee. Those amongst my faithful ones to whom I shall grant the government of the Italian Provinces, will be charged with the protection of thy person, and shall be considered as custodians of the rights of the Church.

if possible, the throne, from which, by his own intrigues, he had caused his father to be removed. Now a vehement controversy arose in the city of Rome itself—two angry political parties contending, one for the Emperor and one for the Pope.

Otho I. was not the sovereign to go back from conquest. He deposed John XII., who had to flee for his life, and he elected as Pontiff Leo VIII., infringing thus the rights of the Roman people (with whom rested the appointment of the Pontiff), and he made a compact with him, in virtue of which, the nomination of the future Pontiffs was vested with *himself* and his *successors* on the imperial throne. The text of the Bull in which this agreement was stipulated and ratified ran thus:—"We, Leo VIII., together with the clergy and people of Rome, accord in perpetuity to the King of the Germans, Otho I., and to his heirs and successors to the crown of Italy, the right to elect a new Pope so often as the Roman See shall be vacant, and to select archbishops and bishops at his pleasure, nominating whom he shall think fit, and bestowing on them the high ecclesiastical investitures, to be afterwards confirmed and consecrated, according to sacred custom, by those to whom the right to ratify such high charges belongs."

On this momentous occasion the Sovereign Pontiff and Roman people took the "oath of fealty" at the hands of the Emperor, following the same ceremonial as had celebrated the election to the Empire of Charlemagne. Money was coined as of old, with the imperial effigy on one side and the Pope's name on the other.

On his part the Emperor confirmed Pepin's donation to the Church, reserving to himself the imperial prerogatives, and the suzerainty of the soil.¹

But the blessings of peace, so ardently desired by all

¹ "Salva super eodem ducatis nostra in omnibus dominatione et illorum ad nostram partem et filii nostri subiectione, omnia superius nuntiata roboramus ut in nostro permaneant jure principatu atque ditione." February 13, 962. Diplom. Otton. in Prin. Eccles. Romanae. MSS. in the Grand Library of Paris, cart. 112. Monum. Ger. Tom. iv., p. 159.

parties, failed to smile upon Italy even after this alliance had been made with so much solemnity, and furious contentions still raged over the country. The Duchy of Benevento was still disputed between Lombards and Saracens, and the Greeks once more conquered Apulia, the Abbruzzi, and Calabria, and governed these provinces by dukes.

Such was the state of Italy during the tenth century; and the more we contemplate it, the more we are astonished at the rapidity with which, from so heterogeneous a mass of races, sprang, as if by magic, a powerful unity of civilization, of arts, language, and literature.

But the seeds of civil polity and art were working silently and unceasingly throughout. The continuity of this civil polity (of the polite arts and of industry) is found more than elsewhere marked, in spite of the ravages of the Saracens, and the dominion (in some provinces) of the Lombards, in the southern provinces of Italy. There, to the olden influences of Magna Græcia (whose traditions in art and splendour were never erased), was now added the supremacy of Byzantium; whose architecture, religion, manners, and language, branching from a kindred root, created in the Neapolitan and Sicilian provinces indissoluble bonds.

Those provinces (whose history has been much neglected) form the real link of connection, as we shall afterwards see, between the "olden" civilization and the "new."

The remainder of the *Kingdom of Italy*, which had been originally divided into thirty marquisates or duchies, was afterwards subdivided into a more considerable number of counties, and these were divided into feuds or fiefs by their possessors, the marquises, to the smaller nobles, who held the lands of them, as their superiors.

Each member of this new society, down to the commonest soldier or retainer, took the oath of fealty to his superior—the lord, baron, or marquis from whom he held his lands—thus raising him in dignity, in his own eyes, as a servant bound by reciprocal compacts, over the hordes of slaves, on whom all labours were imposed as though they were beasts of burden.

The contests between the cities of Northern Italy and the landholders began early. As far back as the year 882, during the lifetime of Charles le Gros, Milan had been fortified to protect the burghers from the rapacity and violence of the feudal lords. These powerful nobles were so generally and so constantly oppressive, that after the lapse of centuries one great family, the Della Torre of Milan, have survived in name, as examples of humanity, valour, piety, and beneficence, which marks them as a dramatic contrast to every other.

Bergamo and Reggio, by episcopal intercession, obtained the same privileges—the prevailing industry of those flourishing towns being of a nature, above all others, to excite the cupidity of the neighbouring lords.

Amongst the first demands made by free populations, was the right “to manufacture and to bear arms;” and once fortified and armed, those privileged cities asserted a right to self-government, and an exemption from many of the petty impositions and annoyances the open towns were subject to.

Amongst the liberties demanded by the rising towns were the power of “free choice in marriage,” and the permission “to ring the city bells at will;” these, and several other privileges were conferred on them by imperial grant: and Otho even extended their franchise to the point of exempting them from direct homage to the counts, their nominal superiors, granting precedence over the latter to the bishops, and naming a provost to decide judicial questions, in common with one or two “consuls,” or Scabini, chosen by the free populations of the cities themselves.

The episcopal rights soon became questions of serious dissensions. The bishops named by the Emperor, and those sent by Rome, advanced equal claims to obedience; and from this arose a gradual withdrawing in secular affairs from the government of the bishops and the appointment of lay magistrates, who were assumed to govern according to “*customs notorious to all men*,” or by written laws.

During the long period of absolute subjection to their northern masters, the populations of Italy had had time to assimilate in blood and in manners, and the moment was approaching when the forthcoming civilization was to produce a vivid and altogether new life in the northern and central provinces of Italy, and yet marked by the impressions of the race which had longest borne rule over the different provinces. It was long, however, before the polite arts made their way amongst them. The hard, rude, obliterating hand of the Barbarians had meantime never made way in the more favoured southern provinces.

There it must be remembered that the Greeks never lost hold of many important provinces and maritime ports. Besides their supremacy over Venice and the Pentapolis, of which Ravenna was the chief city, Genoa, Pisa, and Rome itself had lain under their influence and bore the stamp of their genius and civilization in the products of their industry, commerce, and art.

At the time now referred to, Naples, Gaeta, Amalfi, and Bari were under Greek rule. These cities had been fortunate enough to have been exempted from the frightful presence of actual Barbarians within their walls; and the arts of peace and commerce and manufactures had never ceased in them, but continued, amidst desolated districts, to shed a mild and protective influence over the refugees from fire and sword. Defended by strong walls, lofty fortresses, by weapons framed with all the skill of the period, with abundant magazines, and a steady rule under exarchs or dukes, these cities are proved by contemporary documents to have kept up an uninterrupted commerce with the Levant. They even founded monasteries in the Holy Land; and in Jerusalem itself, when it was won by the first Crusaders, Christian mercantile establishments or "fattorie" were found existing.

They may virtually be considered free cities, so slender was the tie that bound them to their nominal allegiance to Constantinople, and so impossible was it to the Emperors of the East (except in a few rare instances) to send any powerful and regular præsidium of troops, suffi-

cient for their defence from Barbarians, or for the assertion of imperial rights. Thus, though the nominal right of the Emperor to garrison these cities always existed, and was occasionally enforced, their municipal affairs and personal liberties were left to their own control. They were governed by the pandects of Justinian, and by excellent municipal laws, and formed altogether a group of highly civilized, active, industrious communities.

After the Longobards had conquered Ravenna and the Pentapolis (A.D. 720–30), Bari became the capital of almost all Apulia, which had been conquered by Byzantium. There they remained dominant, till chased by the Normans (as we shall see in the course of these pages). The occupation of Pisa and Genoa by Franks and Lombards did not cut off the deference and nominal fealty of these cities to Constantinople; and for tenure they presented annually a splendid silken standard to the Emperors of the East.

But Venice was the Italian city upon which the influence of Byzantium was, perhaps, most strongly impressed and most permanently retained, from the earliest rise of the future queen of the lagoons, throughout the Middle Ages, to comparatively recent times. The origin and rise of Venice forms one of those topics which never fail to create the deepest interest. In all other cities the building of walls, stately fabrics, and fortresses seems to be relatively simple and intelligible; the great amount of free labour obtained from slaves, prisoners of war, and the material solidity of the earth, apparently accounts for these. But Venice is to us the connecting link between the pre-historic aboriginal *lake dwellers* and modern society. The traces of former tribes residing in lakes for safety, on huts supported on piles, are uniform throughout Europe. Probably the idea was borrowed from the castor, an animal which then abounded on the rivers. But the transition from these huts, built upon piles, to the splendid palaces which at so early an epoch already made Venice celebrated, is so extraordinary that we cannot even now comprehend the union of science, of

will, and of patience, by which the piles of Friuli were driven so deep and so securely into the mud of the lagoons, as to bear for centuries edifices like those we behold with admiration and awe; and this at a period so remote and so little understood as to be classed with the Middle Ages.

Once the resort of homeless wanderers, commerce, independence, and a sense of security caused Venice to be thronged with citizens, from whom sprang those princely merchants, those consummate diplomatists, and, better than either, those ardent patriots, the fanaticism of whom to their sea-girt home is no doubt the secret of the empire the city held over public attention until a recent period.

Nothing in Italian history approaches the singleness of soul of the Venetian patriotism; the drama cannot exalt it more than the records of history do; it stands by itself, the noblest example that can be offered to the youth of the land. It withstood Selavonian invasion and Papal pretensions with a valour and a philosophical defiance of superstition as rare as it was admirable. Some account of the earliest records of this singular and wonderful commonwealth, and of an oligarchy unique in history, cannot but be acceptable.

Some five-and-twenty years before the final overthrow of the Western Empire, during the invasion of Attila, 450, the more wealthy inhabitants of Padua, Verona and Treviso, and other flourishing Italian cities, had fled from the mainland of Venetia to a group of islands situated in the adjacent lagoons. These lagoons were formed of the mud washed down by several large rivers, converging on the extreme confines of the Adriatic; and there is evidence to show that these rivers then bore along a greater volume of water and mud than they do now. These rocky islands offered a safe refuge to the voluntary exiles; and, though with many hardships, they were enabled to lead there an independent and unmolested life.

The continuance of barbaric inroads and conquests drove other refugees from many a neighbouring city to

join the former band ; and allied by common misfortunes, bound by common interests, and with a common future before them, open to energy and perseverance, they soon formed a homogeneous population—parsimonious, patient, intelligent, and enterprising. Their chief resources were the fish abounding in the Adriatic and in the salt which they prepared from the first dawn of their history, and down to its latest records ; and for the invaluable monopoly of which, so many wars and so many treaties were made, and were broken or observed as force prevailed on either side.

It was indispensable to be hardy and expert navigators for a people thus situated. Accordingly, we find they ran their barks into all the rivers to trade with the Barbarians in safety, the latter being utterly ignorant of and superstitiously afraid of all maritime modes of conveyance.

Forgotten by the Romans on one hand, and disregarded by the Ostrogoths on the other, they early elected popular tribunes, and were governed by their own self-constituted laws. United by hatred both of the Ostrogoths and Longobards (whom they abhorred as heretics no less than as conquerors), they reconciled themselves to their isolated mode of existence, and became so attached to it as to domicile themselves permanently in their harbour of refuge, and to institute manners and customs different from those of all the world.

Their self-elected tribunes having quarrelled, a popular assembly agreed A.D. 697, at Heraclea, to elect a Doge or Duke, who should be invested with the chief command over all the inhabitants of the lagoons ; union in council and command being imperatively called for by the rise of a new peril, that of the Uscocchi, a savage and piratical tribe, which had begun to invest the Adriatic, and to pillage the many small, semi-independent, and flourishing Greek cities of Istria, and of the entire eastern coast of the Adriatic.

These smaller cities entered into a league of common defence with Venice, and, in return for the protection her more powerful armed galleys afforded them, they

agreed to submit to such officers of justice as she might think fit to appoint to their several communities.

In consequence of the above compact, the Venetians were enabled to repulse the pirates who had assailed them in hordes from Narenta and Croatia, and the Doges of Venice assumed the titles of Dukes of Venice and Dalmatia.

On the principal island of Rialto their city had been meantime built. Rising from the wave with a Byzantine splendour, an Eastern luxury and a Moresque fancy, derived from the continued and direct sources of civilization of the East, she rose, in all the charm and grace of her lofty palaces, her glorious churches, and her splendid public buildings, reflected in the waters of her lagoons, and brightened by the sunshine of her transparent skies, the privileged daughter of that fair Byzantine city, whose influence was so long predominant in her, and from whom she derived her taste for splendour and beauty, and her supremacy in art.

The name of Doge, or Duke, was generally assumed by the imperial lieutenants who governed various cities of Italy under the Emperors of the East. Hence the name of the highest dignity in Venice, so long considered dependent on the Eastern Empire. The Venetians, in fact, never acknowledged the supremacy of Charlemagne nor his successors. Their interests, as well as their sympathies, were all faithful to Byzantium; they were intensely adverse to all northern influences. In the year 809 they fought with the determined spirit of independence against the successors of Charlemagne. At that time they repaired, with their principal treasures, to the chief of the islands called Rialto, where they founded their capital. There, about twenty years later, they transferred the body of their patron, Saint Mark, from its former site at Alexandria in Egypt, assuming his emblem, the apocalyptic lion (with the face of a man, and book) as their badge. And this standard of the "winged lion" ever afterwards represented to them all that life has of most ennobling and attaching—country, religion,

and home; glory, freedom, and fame. It kindled in them an enthusiasm which bore them onwards in the face of obstacles, to calmer eyes apparently insurmountable.

From the peculiarities of the position and growth of Venice arose a form of government especially adapted to its need—an oligarchy, jealous and unscrupulous, but efficient, enlightened, and devoted to the interests of the state. The deliberative, legislative, and executive powers were distributed and adjusted so as to be a model of political wisdom; but, considered with reference to the masses of the lower orders and slaves, their policy is less to be commended. They prohibited the use of arms to their subjects, preferring to hire, as needed, foreign condottieri; and it cannot be concealed that they opposed in every way the moral elevation of the humbler classes. On the other hand, the government of the Italian provinces was mild and prosperous in general, under the Venetians. We find perpetually cities revolting from their feudal tyrants, and offering their allegiance to the Republic. As in all Italian cities of the Middle Ages, her policy was that of extermination of her foes. Her sanguinary and romantic episodes of history have often been the theme of the orator and the poet. But her unerring sagacity overbore even these crimes; and the history of her lucrative and enlightened home policy deserves a space we cannot here afford it, and an attention it has not yet sufficiently received.

Enough has now been pointed out to show the influence of the Byzantine element in the new civilization of Italy, which was to develop more fully in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, with the revival of letters and art—"nel mille," as the Italians call it; an epoch the leading features of which were, the increased power of cities, the rudimentary formation of municipal codes, the extension of the privileges and power of citizens, and the reaction of the Pontiffs of Rome against imperial pretensions. The "spiritual supremacy" of the Church was also boldly asserted and established, so often as force of arms favoured it, over princes and empires.

Five centuries had elapsed since the final overthrow of the Western Empire had reduced Italy to become the passage ground of invaders—Ostrogoths, Goths, Greeks, Longobards,¹ Franks, Hungarians, Saracens, and Germans, who had meantime left nearly indelible traces of their presence on her soil. But the great light of the immortal Greco-Latin civilization had never been wholly quenched, and the moment was at hand when, by her native genius, her geographical position, and the overwhelming success of religion and patriotism, united against the Teutons, she was once more to arise, and give her teaching to the nations of the West.

For another five hundred years we shall find her, in the words of Scripture, “a lady of kingdoms;” we shall observe that she literally taught all nations not only the manual but the intellectual arts; that to her was given, as an inheritance from Athens, that faultless harmony of taste, which makes all buildings without her Alpine ranges seem barbarous in their want of her inexpressible

¹ The longest, hardest, most cruel dominion in Italy was that of the Longobards, described as an annihilation of the country. Yet upon careful approximate calculations the invaders did not numerically surpass 120,000 men; with an effective armed force of about 20,000 they possessed in the Peninsula, a territory computed at about 30,000 square miles. Granting, hypothetically, the number of 150 inhabitants to each square mile of territory (population having increased, 204 inhabitants now occupy the same space) the sum total of Longobard subjects would have been 4,500,000, thus giving to every Longobard soldier the mastery over 225 serfs and a piece of ground about a square mile and a half in size. Now, this does not seem probable, no more than that a population of 4,500,000 should have been crushed out and annihilated by twenty thousand armed men. Those, however, who have maintained the Teutonic preponderance in the population during the Middle Ages in the Italian municipalities (and there is a school in Germany which asserts this) have been too general in their inferences. Analysis certainly shows us that the general character of the new society, especially in the aristocracy, took its impress from the conquerors. But the indigenous element of population soon re-asserted itself, remodelled and strengthened by intermarriage with a purer and more powerfully constituted race. Thus no sooner did circumstances in any way favour the Italians than they uprose, with self-conscious rights and valour; and from their sheltering cradles, the walled and privileged cities, they never ceased warring against the foreign nobles until they finally subdued them, by compelling them to incorporate themselves with them inside the cities—so often as force of arms permitted this great stroke of policy to be carried out.

elegance of proportion and purity of outline. To her was granted, not solely the heart to conceive, but the hand to execute, those masterpieces of painting, the sight of which adds a pang to the recollection of the perishable nature of earthly things. In her cities, sculpture again rose, if not with the divine majesty of Greece, at least, with a powerful charm, peculiarly its own. To her science seems to yield the firstfruits of all those secrets that now bless mankind ; and during the ensuing five hundred years we pass through a series of historical teachings in Italian history, the importance and value of which are more and more appreciated by every succeeding generation.

CHAPTER VII.

Development of the Italian Burgher element—Re-constitution of Society—Contest between the Tiara and Crown—Spiritual Absolutism asserted and carried into effect by the Roman Pontiff as “Representative of Christ’s Church upon Earth.”

THE time was now near at hand for the renewal of society ; and the chief characteristics of Italy (with a few exceptions) were eminently democratic.

The genius of the Papacy embodied in Hildebrand, the Tuscan carpenter’s son, assumed the supremacy over all other constituted powers, and remodelled the new society on its own former municipal grounds, reviving laws, traditions, customs, and feelings never wholly extinct throughout ages of darkness and of barbarian conquest. This prevalence of the municipal and democratic element was equally far removed from feudalism and from patriotism, as the latter virtue is understood in our days. The Peninsula was then too divided ; first, under different masters, then into different races, and lastly by different interests, to allow the existence of a feeling which can only spring from a common feeling of home, common laws, common sympathies, common pursuits, hope for the future, and reverence for the past.

It was the glory of the genius of Hildebrand to perceive instinctively how much might be made out of power and of prosperity, no less for the benefit of the Church than for that of the country at large ; and afterwards, of humanity universally, by entering into direct conflict with the barbarous force of purely “military despotism.” And, in his case, as in that of Charlemagne, the force of an exceptional nature set its seal on the character of the times he more immediately influenced.

We shall, after running rapidly over the principal events immediately preceding the era of Hildebrand,

recall to mind the leading acts that initiated the supremacy of the Tiara over the Crown.

The erection, or reconstruction, of city walls for the facilitating of self-defence, the rising consciousness of personal rights, the possibility of accumulating property with comparative safety, gave a new impulse to Italy, and the labour of "revival" was now everywhere commenced.

During the tenth and eleventh centuries, the more careful cultivation of the rural districts brought a four-fold increase of the revenue. Cities bristled with towers and buildings; the concerns of a busy municipal existence occupied the minds of the free citizens, or middle class, who, dedicated, on one hand, to the exercise of commercial interests and industry, and, on the other, to the discharge of municipal duties, were governed by "Consuls," "Scabini," or civil magistrates. Thus, at the outset of communal life in Italy, two characteristics are marked. The old Latin capacity for organisation is found presiding over the formation of associated guilds, and the commercial code, which formed the basis of the general law, mixed afterwards with the canon, and also with the common law; and on the other hand a profound and exclusive attachment to local habits and customs, an exaltation, at once pathetic and grotesque, of every separate walled town in the eyes of its citizens, and a jealousy and enmity to every other, which was, on a smaller scale, but the revival of the pride of the ancient Roman. Every town was, in the Middle Ages, a "Rome" to its citizens. .

The want of roads, and the danger and difficulty of travel, no less than the expense of moving, made the cities of Italy virtually at a great distance from one another. Each had its own peculiar tendency, each its proverbial by-word, each its epithet of honour; but all agreed in one common homage to the clergy, whose sacred character not only protected them in general from outrage, but fitted them peculiarly to be the mediators between party warfare and civil contest alike; and who, being almost all Italians, felt a natural sympathy with

their countrymen, and a dislike to the feudal lords, nearly all foreigners, and too often unscrupulous in their dealings with the Church.

The *democratic constitution* of the Church, which opened a prospect of the highest offices to the humblest priest, was not only peculiarly suited to the Italian mind, but was irresistibly attractive at an epoch when feudal pride and insolence closed every other path to men of obscure parentage.

Taking up the broken thread of events, we must turn back to the time when Otho of Germany obtained the oath of Suzerainty from the Pontiff, in order to fully understand the exact mutual relations between the Church and Empire, at the time when the quarrel concerning the Investitures broke out. The son and grandson of Otho (Otho the Second and Third) succeeded him on the Imperial throne of Germany and Italy. The line of Otho becoming then extinct, Henry II. of Bavaria, and Conrad the Salic, were in turn elected Emperors; their reigns lasted from the year 1004 to 1039.

During this space of time (about eighty years), the German Imperial dictators made no less than twelve various descents upon Italy. It was their custom on each occasion to fix their head-quarters at Roncaglia (in the neighbourhood of Piacenza, forming part of the Lombard States.)

There all the great feudal chiefs assembled from the states who owned the Imperial sway; they renewed their oaths of allegiance, and brought in their tributes. Diets were held there, and grants made for the use of the Italians, the fulfilment of which rested solely on the good will of the local magistrates, as the Emperor had not the slightest power to enforce any decrees; it being obviously impossible for him to garrison all the cities of the Peninsula. Though the insolence and rapacity of individual feudal chiefs caused them to be detested, hunted down, and finally subdued in many parts of Italy and particularly in Tuscany, yet the nominal rule of the Emperor was almost unfelt in other parts of the

country, and we hear constantly the recurring phrase in the records of the cities of Romagna and the Marches—that such a town lived “in liberty” under the protection of the Emperor.

In the Diets of Roncaglia, the high ecclesiastical dignitaries joined with the popular magistrates (nominees of the Emperor) in suing for “the interests and privileges of the Municipalities.” The feudal nobility, as was to be expected, opposed these with the utmost fury and insolence, and in order in some measure to bridle the lawlessness of the nobles, Conrad, the Emperor reigning in the year 1039, framed a constitution, which, sanctioned by the Diet, has ever since then been considered as the basis of *feudal right*.

Great modifications were made in this code, as to the privileges and powers of royalty. The hereditary succession to feuds became almost established by law, as it had long existed by custom and connivance. The greater independence of the nobility was thus guaranteed, but, on the other hand, severe restrictions were laid on the abuse of their power over their dependents, and great numbers of bondsmen and serfs were restored to perfect liberty.

The conflict between the two great bodies of nobles and citizens did not, however, cease all at once, even after this code had become law; we find it constantly renewed in the succeeding reigns of the son and grandson of Conrad the Salic, Henry III. (1039–1106), Henry IV. (1056–1106) and of Henry V.

During the reign of Henry IV. the dispute between the Church and the Empire on the important subject of episcopal investitures, was brought to an issue by the consummate policy and genius of Hildebrand. This great question deserves the most attentive consideration. It was the origin of almost all the disputes between the Empire and the Church for three hundred years and more, and there are symptoms even now of its not being entirely at rest.

Since the aggrandisement of the See of Peter, by the

donation of Pepin, a donation subsequently confirmed by Charlemagne, and ratified by succeeding emperors, the Tiara had become the prize of avarice and violence. Haughty and lawless Roman barons, known only by their crimes, had been placed on the throne of St. Peter by the intrigues of the infamous female favourites of princes; and, except in the annals of the Eastern Empire, no parallel can be found to the history of the Papacy during the century and a half which followed the extinction of the Carlovingian line. In allusion to this sad era, Baronius, the historian of the Church, observes grievously "that the invisible presence of Christ as the Head of the Church, alone saved it from ruin and annihilation in unworthy hands."

Of the twenty-four Popes who during that interval sat on the Papal throne, two were murdered, five sent into exile, some were elected by force of arms, others by the influence of money, two by the open power of courtesans; another was self-appointed. The Papal abdication was on one occasion purchased by a well-filled purse; on another by the promise of a fair bride. The treasury was pillaged by one Pope, who afterwards fled with his spoils. He afterwards returned to Rome, ejected his substitute, and mutilated him in the most revolting manner. We read of the disinterred corpse of one Pope being brought before his successor, and receiving a retrospective sentence of deposition; and not long afterwards we find the same "Pontiff-Judge" receiving the same posthumous condemnation! One Pontiff was elected at the age of eighteen; another before he had completed his twelfth year. One of these Popes (a man of warlike propensities) took a coadjutor, in order that he might in person command such legions as Rome sent to the field; another agreed, for certain pieces of money, to recognize the "Patriarch of Constantinople" as universal Bishop, and head of the Catholic Church. In a word, crime, greed, and licentiousness had long held revel in the Vatican, and the distracted Church, possessing at one time three heads, witnessed the rival celebration of three

Pontifical Masses in the city of Rome. Save in exceptional cases, we may judge what were the morals of the clergy, when such were the examples set by the different heads of the Church.

Another circumstance tended greatly to the demoralisation of the clergy. Church preferment was allowed to laymen, and high ecclesiastical dignities were constantly held by the profligate nominees of capricious and overbearing feudal chiefs. Before Hildebrand ascended the Papal throne, four learned and revered prelates, selected from amongst the most superior men of Italy and Germany, had purified the Court of Rome from the overt and shameless scandals of the past; and Hildebrand, who to their virtues added the ascendancy of genius, awaited the opportune moment to carry out a plan of complete and effectual revolution in the interests of religion, and in the dignity and honour of its head.

It was imperatively necessary that the power of preferment should be taken from the laity, before that reform in the morals and manners of the clerical body, necessary to reinstate them in the reverence of the people, could be effected.

It was also absolutely necessary before the clerical order could raise itself, that its chief should, in every way, be worthy of his exalted spiritual functions, and be raised in moral and intellectual strength above all other earthly powers; and in lieu of being, as heretofore, subject to owning the suzerainty of a "feudal superior," that the sceptre of equity and justice should rest in his hands, and thus give him command over all.

It was necessary that the Spiritual Head of the Church, as supreme representative of Christ in the flesh, and visible chief of the Church of God, should exercise the power given by the Lord to St. Peter, "to bind and to loose at his will," and set a yoke upon all sinners, whether mitred ecclesiastics or kings upon their thrones.

Taking into consideration the lawlessness and violence of the state of society, and the abyss of corruption and depravity into which the clergy had sunk, this would

have seemed impossible to any mind less immovable, any conscience less irresistibly resolute, and any intellect less vast than that of Hildebrand. The gigantic scheme of *reform* he had the glory to carry out, and which has immortalised his name, dawned upon his thoughts whilst he was a monk, and Prior of the Monastery of Clugny in France. Indignation at the abject state of the ecclesiastical order, and at the folly, ignorance, and vice it displayed, aroused in him a generous wrath, and a fervent resolve to combat these powers of sloth and darkness. An opportunity was soon afforded him to commence his arduous but glorious career, of regeneration of his age, and he embraced it with the promptitude of zeal and the faith of inspiration.

Of the long list of stately monasteries commanded by Rome towards the middle of the eleventh century, not one perhaps rose superior in wealth and piety to that of Clugny, where, in the year 1048, Bruno, the Bishop of Toul, lately raised to the Pontifical throne at the nomination of Henry III. and of a German Synod, sought the hospitality of the monks. Hildebrand, the Prior of Clugny, was distinguished by that commanding aspect, and clear piercing glance, which inspire awe and respect; his superior qualities, the severity of his self-discipline, his subordination to the will of his superiors; his holiness of life, and the fervency of his zeal, marked him above all his brethren as worthy of esteem and love. Such men exercise irresistible influence over the minds of others, and such did Hildebrand (then in the matured perfection of his faculties) exercise over the newly-elected Pope. To him did Hildebrand declare that an election made beyond the precincts of Rome, at the bidding of a secular power, ought to be regarded as a "profane title to the seat of Peter;" and he urged Bruno to lay aside the vestments and insignia of the Pontifical office, and to pursue his route to Rome in the humble garb of a pilgrim. Bruno complied with every injunction: with bare feet and humble aspect, and, no attendant save Hildebrand, he entered the Eternal City: the majesty of humility and

that of genius seemed personified, and walking side by side.

The acclamations of the Roman clergy and populace rewarded this acknowledgment of their electoral rights, and conferred on the Bishop of Toul, Leo the Ninth, a new and better title to the government of the Church.

Hildebrand was raised instantly to the rank of a cardinal, to the office of sub-deacon of Rome, and of superintendent of the church and convent of St. Paul. The Pope and the Cardinal now took measures for the soothing of the resentment of the Emperor. Leo thrice visited the German Court, taking with him the Papal benediction to Henry, and conveying ecclesiastical censures on the rebellious vassals of the Empire. Nay, so effectual was the aid thus rendered to the Emperor that on the last return of Leo to Italy, he conducted thither a body of Imperial troops, in the hope, by their aid, of expelling the Norman marauders who invaded the Papal territory.

At Civitella, however, the bloody axes of the Normans, who were led by Humphrey and Robert, brothers of William of the Iron Hand, prevailed over the swords of the Papal followers. The forces of Leo were utterly routed, and the Pontiff was compelled, by the force of inexorable circumstances, to bestow the Papal benediction on the fierce adventurers, and to give them by treaty three great Fiefs of Apulia, Calabria, and Sicily, to be held under Papal suzerainty. Humiliated by defeat, and broken-hearted at having been compelled to treat with these ferocious miscreants, Leo not long afterwards expired; but the more wary Hildebrand, gifted with the practical and prophetic foresight so commonly remarked in all men who are destined to have a lasting influence on their kind, discerned the important aid he might afterwards derive from these new and warlike vassals, and was, therefore, far from holding them in the same abhorrence.

Four Popes of comparative obscurity succeeded Leo the Ninth—Victor, Stephen, Nicholas, and Alexander—whilst Hildebrand, who, with patient sagacity, was maturing the mighty change now at hand, had become successively,

Cardinal, Deacon, Archdeacon, Legate, and Chancellor of the Apostolic See. One step only was now wanting to complete his elevation to the supreme power he had carefully prepared his measures to obtain ; and, at this memorable juncture, he was suddenly proclaimed Pope by an apparent burst of popular enthusiasm, at the obsequies of Alexander. Silence having been obtained with difficulty from the tumultuous people, the voice of one of the cardinals announced the election of the new Pope by the " Sacred College."

Crowned instantly afterwards with the tiara, and apparelled in the sumptuous robes of the Roman Pontiffs, Hildebrand, under the title of Gregory VII., was then presented to the people ; the joy and exultation of all present contrasting strangely with the ceremonial gloom of the funeral, and with the wail of the dirge sung in the same church over the bier of his predecessor. After this first burst of " freedom of election," the greatest decorum and outward respect to the Emperor marked the subsequent proceedings. It was given out to the world that—" Of his grace and clemency, Henry, King of Germany and Italy, calling himself ' Emperor ' had ratified the election of his dearly beloved Father, Gregory VII."

That same world, however, knew that despite the Emperor's hostility, the Pope was able and willing to maintain his own rights ; and that the Emperor, instead of ratifying the popular election, would have gladly driven the Pope from Rome as the most dangerous of rebels, and the most subtle of men. But the coincidence of official language and truth has been much the same in all ages.

Twenty-five years had elapsed between the day on which Hildebrand conducted Bruno (Leo IX.) to Rome, and that of his own election to the Pontificate. During all that time he had been the real governor of the Church, and had pursued the same aggressive policy towards the German Court, which now brought it into direct collision with Rome.

Meanwhile, Henry IV. had succeeded his father, Henry III. The first few years of his reign were passed under the guardianship of his mother Agnes, the gentle widow of Henry III. But a conspiracy was entered into by rebellious nobles and Churchmen, to obtain possession of the Imperial youth when he was but thirteen years of age.

As Agnes and her son were reposing at Kaiserworth, on the Rhine, from the fatigues of a journey, a galley, impelled by swift rowers, and adorned with every embellishment of art and luxury, appeared before them on the waters of the river.

Anno, Archbishop of Cologne, descended from the barge, and, with every appearance of fair courtesy, invited the youthful Henry to inspect it. He gladly complied, and enjoyed with unfeigned and boyish delight the rapid strokes of the oarsmen and the luxury of the galley. Soon, however, he became aware of the distance increasing between him and his mother; and the anxious countenances of the commanders, urging the rowers to still greater efforts, made him aware of the treachery practised on him. With an energy worthy of riper years, he plunged into the river, and attempted, but in vain, to swim back.

He was consigned to a sumptuous captivity, whilst the Archbishops of Cologne and Mentz, supported by the Dukes of Bavaria and Tuscany, usurped all authority, and plundered the royal treasures during the remainder of his minority.

During this period, Hildebrand, after his accession to the Papal throne, laboured with characteristic intensity in preparing the way for his future operations. His first battle was against himself, and his first combat was against his own feebler nature, which he succeeded in completely subduing; and thus concentrating all his energies on the duties of his exalted position.

His first step was enforcing the celibacy of the clergy. Marriage, and that order of domestic companionship sanctioned from all time by custom, and even by ecclesi-

tical assemblies, were imperatively prohibited; the connection between the priesthood and the laity was to be purely spiritual. The love of the ecclesiastic for his flock was to be impersonal; he was to be "with them" but not "of them;" he was to command through the qualities of the "Spirit," setting aside the "carnal affections" and the lower concerns of existence.

All the tender ties of family and the endearing relationships of life were proscribed: a priest might have neither wife nor children.

From the most remote Christian times, indeed, and even previous to the advent of our Lord, celibacy had always been held up as "the most perfect human state." If even amongst the laity it was so considered, the feeling of mankind as to it being almost the first duty of the clergy, was universal; and had considerably strengthened with time. Even to this day, every irregularity of conduct is lightly regarded by the same congregations who would spit at, and stone a priest who was a married man! The heroes of the Church during the first four centuries almost all followed the precepts of Paul, rather than the example of Peter.

Amongst the ecclesiastical writers, it is difficult to adduce one who does not enlarge on the superiority of the *celibate* above the *conjugal* state. The doctrine, however, was not a Christian one purely, either first or subsequently. In Central and Eastern Asia and the Asiatic Islands it prevailed absorbingly from time immemorial. It is not the first instance in which we recognise the literal truth that religion was "refreshed from the East." But in spite of the prevalence of these ideas, and of an *ecclesiastical law* condemning the marriage of priests, human nature hitherto triumphed, and had proved too strong for Councils and for Popes.

Hildebrand foresaw that the image of "transcendental perfection," presented to the laity in their ecclesiastical teachers, through the imposition of *celibacy*, would strike them the more favourably, as they were themselves dispensed from the burden of so high a prerogative. Within

a few weeks after his accession to the Papal See, Gregory VII. convened a council at the Lateran, and issued a law, not as formerly simply forbidding the marriage of priests, but annulling all of them that existed, and requiring "all laymen to absent themselves from the sacred offices celebrated by any wedded priest."

What the Great Council of Nice had failed to effect, the Synod of the Lateran, inspired by the genius of prophecy from the mouth of Gregory, performed at once and for ever, and the lamentations of the injured, and the cries of the sufferers were drowned in the shouts of victory. Eight hundred years have passed away, and this decree of Gregory VII. rules the Latin Church. The consequences to the morals of the clergy are well known; but as a question of simple policy it was alike useful to the Church and convenient to the State.

Gregory VII. showed the same policy and vigour in dealing with rivals and antagonists. We have seen the pernicious abuses that had desecrated the Church under the prevalence of lay nomination. He now addressed every monarch under the Latin dogma in the language of one inspired by the most ardent faith; he proclaimed first the fundamental doctrine, which, more or less disputed, ruled the western world during the Middle Ages, that the Almighty having been pleased to delegate his own sovereignty over men to the "Supreme head of the Church," the same had a *Divine right to universal obedience*.

Gregory VII. showed consummate policy in the adaptation of the language in which his pretensions were conveyed to the capacity, fears, wishes, and rivalries of each different sovereign. To the French monarch he assumed that every house owed to the Pope, as representative of Peter, the tribute of a penny; and he commanded his legate to collect the tax as a mark of subjection of France to the Holy See. To all the potentates of the West he held the same resolute language, and established his authority upon a wholly unprecedented ground. The tribute in itself was too insignificant to

cavil at, for Hildebrand, or Gregory VII., as we must in future call him, had too much knowledge of mankind to alarm nations by an onerous burden, and far too lofty a soul to be subject to the coarse, overt, profligate rapacity of some of his successors; and the innovation of a tax levied on a people by any alien authority was not immediately perceived. It was to the abuses to which this system afterwards led, however, that the rapid progress of independent thought is chiefly ascribed, and in the quaint and graphic pages of Matthew Paris the question may be studied amusingly and instructively.

Whilst the Pope spoke in thunder to the weak and timid, the savage Robert the Norman, conqueror of Sicily, and William the Conqueror, Lord of England, were soothed (all stained by sacrilege, rapine, and bloodshed as they were) by the most benevolent blandishments. Robert, indeed, he looked upon as one of the most trustworthy allies of the Church.

To William he addressed an epistle couched in terms of paternal regard. "You demonstrate towards us the attachment of a dutiful son; yea, of a son whose heart is moved by the love of his mother: therefore, my beloved son, let your conduct be all that your language has been; let what you have promised be effectually performed."

But though Duke William, as Suzerain of Normandy, had remitted to the Pope the amount of certain dues, he indignantly refused to tender to him the oath of fealty as King of England. "I hold my kingdom," he said, "of God and the sword," and would acknowledge no suzerainty beyond that. He, however, promptly acceded to the usual tribute in money being sent to the Pope. The Church was now far removed from the lowly days of its great Lord and founder; from the humility of the holy Jesus, the poverty of the Apostles, the persecution of the martyrs. It was seated in high places, and the avowed aim of its head was supremacy over *this world*, no less than over that to come. There could easily be made a parallel between the genius of Hilde-

brand and that of the first Napoleon. They began at opposite sides of the great pyramid of human policy, but both met at the same apex—that being the idolatry of self, disguised under the specious plea of glory and religion. Napoleon used the thunders of war, and finally attacked and persecuted the Popes; Gregory employed the thunders of the Vatican, attacked and persecuted Emperors.

The genius of both gave an imprint on their era which will be immortal; and the self-idolatry of both blinded them to the true philosophy of power, which is to share with mankind, and not to engross its prerogatives. Time, the avenger, is day by day consuming that arrogant and insupportable despotism which was initiated by both, each in his own era: the *spiritual* triumphs of Christianity grow brighter during each succeeding generation; but the temporal abuses are fading one by one. In like manner, the clear, brilliant, intellectual organisation Napoleon gave to France is eternal; and the brutal military law, and the coarse and savage Oriental slavery he latterly sought to enforce, is in every generation more and more departing from our observation.

The high, imperishable glory of both has been to instruct and warn, and to benefit their race; and the hierarchical system planned by Gregory VII. presents so many features in common with the imperial one of the great Emperor, the parallel seems to shape itself spontaneously in our thoughts as we read of the former; nor can we, as the fond admirers of one of the loveliest lands under the sun, forbear to add with pleasure, that both these “instruments of the Lord”—these strong men, “the swords of God”—were Tuscans in name, parentage, and genius.

The vision of Gregory VII. was inferior only to that of Ezekiel. From the Eternal City of Rome was to issue forth the voice of God, speaking from the mouth of his chosen one; around him a vast theocratic body should be formed in which political and religious power were to be harmonized. In immediate dependence on himself were to be ranged his cardinals—his highest spiritual lords—some to reside in Rome as electors,

ministers, and councillors, others presiding over the great religious corporate bodies, provinces, and sees of his empire. That empire was the world ! The kings and emperors were regarded, as compared to these, exactly as the lay brethren are in convents—to be treated with kindness and humanity when subservient, but, as a race, wholly inferior to the real monks.

All the various powers of this mighty rule were to be centred in Rome—legislative, administrative, and judicial. There, also, were to be held the extraordinary or Œcumenical Councils and legislature. No limit, save that of his own conscience, was to be imposed on the prerogatives of the Pope ; the crowns of all earthly sovereigns were to be held at his pleasure ; and there dawned on his mind the visions of St. Augustine, as he reconsidered the past and looked forward to the future. The task of heathen Rome had been to conquer and govern ; that of Christian Rome was far loftier—it was to educate this world so as not to be unworthy of a glorious immortality.

Nor, except in the delusions of overweening self-worship, was the aim of Gregory VII. unworthy of his lofty position. He announced his desire to mediate between hostile nations—to reconcile sovereigns and their subjects—to restrain ambition—to redress wrongs—to chastise crime in earthly potentates, and to make the Holy See exalted throughout the earth as the fountain-head of Divine truth and of holy and beneficent influence. Mankind were to be ruled to all good, to all glory, to all greatness, but they were to be ruled solely by the Papacy.

At the era of Gregory VII, this counterbalance of intellect to pure brute force, and the example of his own lofty austerity of nature, no less than the glow and charm with which genius has the power of irradiating mankind, made his pontificate the source of incalculable blessings. But its spiritual influence has been much exaggerated ; the power of the Church, under one or two cases, unquestionably produced all the striking effects that Gregory

could desire, as in the familiar instance of the excommunication of Philip Augustus, but it was commonly found that, under circumstances of anything like average equality, the Popes were quite as beholden to the arm of the flesh as to spiritual thunders for their triumphs. They had often to bow to compromise; sometimes to submit to humiliations, often to endure defeats; and the insufferable abuses of irresponsible ministers of a foreign power, in the temporal affairs of kingdoms, finally produced that reaction which, under the stigmatizing epithet of "revolution," begun in the sixteenth century, is even now becoming bolder and bolder in every succeeding generation.

How far Gregory VII. himself was the believer in his own schemes, it is not possible now for us to decide, any more than we can fix that of his great parallel, the first Napoleon. It is probable that, like priests in general, he was more aware of the weakness than of the strength of human nature; nor could he foresee those scientific discoveries which have so powerfully aided in the emancipation of the human mind. It is sufficient for his immortal glory that his name is a proverb still, and that his influence was on the whole beneficial to the world. To Italy it was more: it raised her, as by a direct revelation from Heaven, to be the rival and the conqueror of her eternal foes beyond the Alps.

The young Emperor Henry issued from his long enervating captivity exactly the antithesis to the austere and gloomy Hildebrand. He was noble and beautiful in person, an adept in all chivalrous and manly exercises, passionately devoted to the chase, and remarkable for the grace and dignity of his bearing; but he was feeble, wayward, capricious, given to fits of passion, and profligate in his private life, far beyond the bounds of the indulgence conceded to youth and to princes.

A struggle with the Papacy was inevitable, and Gregory VII. had still to subdue Honorius and the ecclesiastics of Lombardy, whose privileges he mercilessly trampled on, to win the German peoples from

their allegiance, and to gain over the high German prelates, who, being chiefly lay nominees, naturally looked with greater respect towards their emperor, patron, and suzerain, than to an Italian priest.

The Archbishops of Mentz and Cologne, who had so treacherously beguiled Henry when a youth from the care of his mother, had discovered, as he approached manhood, that he held them in unconquerable aversion; and, fearing his later resentment, they transferred him to the guardianship of Adalbert, Archbishop of Bremen, one of the most versatile and splendid representatives of the prelates of those days. Adalbert was (or assumed to be), by turns, saint, man of the world, courtier, administrator and military commander. His diocese, or, more properly, his archiepiscopal dominion, was larger than many a modern principality. It stretched far away along the shores of the Baltic, and by the banks of the Elbe. Kings treated with him as an equal, and Sweden and Denmark had solicited his services as mediator. Envoys from every state of Europe, not excepting Constantinople, thronged his palace; he was treated on confidential terms by the Pope, and became the chief minister of the Emperor.

Henry found the change from the custody of the austere Anno to the princely Adalbert a joyous one. The former had severely rebuked his vices, the latter hardly noticed them. The folly and recklessness of the public acts of Henry, would lead it to be supposed he was insane. His private life we forbear further allusion to; but, for some time, the natural indulgence inspired by a youth who is at the head of an empire, heir of a long line of sovereigns, his own personal beauty, his captivating manners, and the tardy dissemination of truth in those days, made his wild, senseless tyranny but slightly appreciated. But at Rome, where he was weighed solely in the scale with his own vices, Alexander, then Pontiff, had cited him to appear in person to answer for his crimes of "simony," and of other kinds, with which he was indignantly charged. Although the order was given

in the name of Alexander, we have seen that the new and aggressive policy initiated by Rome against Germany was prompted solely by Gregory VII., then Hildebrand. When, therefore, this act of audacious and unprecedented hostility was issued against Henry, in the dying moments of Alexander, no one but knew the blow was directed by the ambitious and fearless Hildebrand. The citation was, however, treated with contempt by Henry; nor was it at first renewed by the astute and politic Gregory VII.

The tyranny of Henry to his subjects, meanwhile, increased to an extent so unbearable that he seemed resolutely bent on rushing on, to his own ruin. Arbitrary imprisonment was suddenly inflicted on the ancient chiefs of Saxony; their estates were confiscated; creatures of the Emperor were let loose on the land, and even a scheme was mooted to drive the whole population behind a given line, or pale, and to replace it by a Swabian colony. Not content with employing his own officers on this monstrous task, or perhaps fearing their compassion for his victims, the aid of Danes and Bavarians was procured to crush the independence, ruin the prosperity, and extirpate the people of flourishing, free, wealthy Saxony.

Under these cruel outrages, the Saxons sent to demand an interview with Henry at Goslar, and on the appointed day the deputies presented themselves at the palace. Henry, engaged in a game of chance, bade them wait till it was decided. An indignant murmur for justice followed. A second time, in the insolence of lawless youth, Henry returned a slighting answer; but even Saxon patience had its limits: in a few hours the castle of Harzburg was blockaded by a host of armed men, headed by the afterwards famous Otho of Nordheim, whose glory gave a new lustre to his native land.

Escaping from Harzburg with difficulty, Henry traversed Western Germany in order to gather troops for the subjection of his Saxon subjects. He found his presence unavailing; his crimes and follies seemed justly chastised by his humiliation. His allies joined the Saxons, and

it was now his turn to suffer the indignities he had so often heaped upon others. So low had he fallen, he was declared unworthy of the spurs of knighthood and of the imperial crown. A diet was summoned for his formal deposition, and his sceptre was offered to Rudolf of Swabia. A few days more, and life and crown would have been forfeited, when a dangerous illness, exaggerated into a rumour of his death, worked once more on the fickle tide of popular fancy and sentiment. He appeared before the citizens of Worms, pale and worn from disease, meek in deportment, destitute, deserted, alone. Women wept over his woes; men offered their purses, soldiers their lives, in his cause; the diet was dissolved, and Rudolf of Swabia made his escape.

Henry had never wanted abundance of excellent advice, and the most paternal counsels, from Gregory VII. He now promised amendment in his disorderly conduct, and, as a proof of his sincerity, he gave up Milan, the stronghold of the Imperialists in Italy, to the Pope. But his sole thought and aim was vengeance on the Saxon insurgents, and thus blinded to every consideration of policy, he purchased for the moment the "neutrality" of the Pope, with vague promises to the Saxons, to the Emperor, and to Rudolf. The Pope accordingly retired from further intervention.

Henry immediately marched from Worms at the head of the troops furnished by that city; braving the inclemency of a severe winter, and regardless of his own danger from cold and fatigue, after his late severe illness.

Otho awaited him with a well-disciplined army, and the Imperialists declined the unequal encounter. The rage and mortification of Henry were extreme. Reduced to capitulate, humbled once more in presence of his subjects, he bound himself to dismantle his fortresses, to withdraw his garrisons, restore the fiefs he had confiscated, and to confirm to the Saxons their long-cherished privileges. He was also bound to proclaim an unlimited and immediate amnesty.

Unfortunately the same thirst for vengeance which had actuated Henry, now moved the victorious Saxons to many excesses which cannot be left unnoticed. They drove Henry from Goslar, destroyed the town of Harzburg, levelled the royal sepulchre, where his infant son lay buried, desecrated the graves of his ancestors, and brought on themselves a speedy and merited retribution.

Whilst Henry, claiming the aid of Gregory, invoked his excommunication of his sacrilegious foes, the Pope saw with joy the approach of a general civil war, and he received the appeals of both parties. To Henry he sent a decree, through his mother Agnes, to enforce the "celibacy of the clergy," and to restore to its lawful channels the patronage of the Church. Henry made fair promises; the Papal Legates convoked a national synod of German prelates to be held under their own presidency. Henry submitted; the Archbishop of Bremen having protested against this usurpation, the Legates passed a sentence suspending him from his see. In like manner, five of Henry's councillors who were obnoxious to the Court of Rome, and who had been excommunicated by Alexander, were banished the Court and driven from his presence. Moreover, edicts for the Government of the Teutonic Church were passed without the leave of the Emperor being asked.

These important steps taken by the Church of Rome were crowned with ample success. Indeed, the time for attempting them had been chosen by Gregory with that consummate policy which marked his reign. He knew that the thoughts of Henry were engrossed by very different aims.

The great feudal vassals and nobles of Germany had been aroused to jealousy of the Saxon boors, and particularly of Otho of Nordheim, and after the outrage of Harzburg, they offered their aid to Henry to chastise the rebels. Nor was it merely a vague desire to check the rising glory of Otho that made them press to the standard of Henry; they feared that the vast estates they possessed in right of confiscation must be restored. Henry used

every art to aggravate this fear, and to incite to a hope of future plunder. The Abbot of Fulda and the Archbishop of Mentz appeared in his ranks, with crucifixes borne before them. Guelph of Bavaria and Godfrey of Lorraine were also on his side, Godfrey on this occasion deserting the alliance, conjugal and political, that bound him to the house of Tuscany. The King of Hungary came as an ally, allured by the hopes of new fiefs to be assigned to him on the dismemberment of Saxony, and Rudolf of Swabia, now the loyal vassal of the monarch he had hoped to supersede.

The two rival armies, encamped on the opposite banks of the Unstrut, were in a fog so dense that neither were at first aware of the presence of the other. Indeed, Henry had retired to rest, when Rudolf, made aware of the vicinity of the foe, gave him instant warning. Henry threw himself at his feet, in a transport of gratitude, leaped on his horse, and led forward his troops, promising them victory.

Surprised as they were, the Saxons fought unflinchingly; but the odds were too great against them. The entire mailed chivalry of the West bore down on them. The Emperor, whatever were the crimes of his policy and the views of his life, was the prince of soldiers; and, after an awful slaughter, his victory was complete. The cost, however, was equally great, for most of the nobles of the West perished on that fatal day. With the aid of Godfrey of Lorraine, the victory was improved. Otho of Nordheim and the principal Saxon chiefs were placed in Henry's power, and he returned to Worms, where a solemn "Te Deum" celebrated his sanguinary revenge.

Whilst Henry was at war in Germany, Gregory had convened a council in the Lateran. This council will ever be celebrated, as it sent forth the celebrated decree of the "Papal supremacy above all earthly monarchs." The most august ceremonies of the Church were celebrated to give the more honour to this decree; it prohibited to all monarchs and rulers the exercise of the rights of investiture of any spiritual dignity, and transferred to the

Pontiff a power and supremacy over civil governments that more than balanced that of the native rulers. Not even under the despotism of the Cæsars had pretensions so vast and so exclusive ever been claimed.

The council had been convened expressly for the passing of this great act, but it was not immediately known to the world; it was placed in the Papal Chancery, as an authority to be invoked in time of need. The Pope contented himself with duly intimating to the German Court and prelates, the other and unimportant acts of the council. Gregory VII. never threatened or discussed points; he decided on his plans and executed them. He now instantly commenced to act on this law.

The Bishop of Lucca was dead—the Pope nominated a successor. The Bishop of Bamberg was accused of simony—he was suspended. The Archbishop of Bremen continued to deny the rights of the Papal Legates to preside in a German synod; the Pope deprived him of his see, and interdicted him the Sacraments.

To the young monarch of Germany, exultant in victory, the Papal encroachments seemed more offensive than formidable. He scornfully retaliated by heaping favours and emoluments on his excommunicated councillors, sent one of his own chaplains to be "Bishop of Lucca," nominated a scandalous and obscure member of his own household to the princely See of Cologne, and prohibited appeals to Rome from his Saxon subjects, even on questions of exclusively ecclesiastical jurisdiction.

Gregory naturally considered the rash and insolent youth as the direct instrument of Providence in furtherance of his designs, and an ineffectual attempt on his life, on Christmas Eve, A.D. 1075, of which Henry was accused, increased the acrimony of the contention which was henceforth to rage between them.

Appeals were readily encouraged from Saxony against the political crimes and the private vices of Henry, and Gregory VII. summoned him to Rome to answer these charges in person. The Emperor answered by convening a Synod at Worms, in which Gregory was accused of

every infamy: of murder, of simony, of necromancy, of Devil worship, of habitual though concealed profligacy, of being base born, and of an impious profanation of the Eucharist.

All these charges, except that of ignoble and uncertain birth, are refuted by the evident malignity of the writer, Cardinal Benno, his enemy. But the Synod of Worms came to a different conclusion; after a debate of two days' duration, it closed with an unanimous vote of abjuration and deposition of Gregory VII.

Scarcely was the assembly dissolved than the Emperor's messengers flew to obtain the support of other prelates, and of the temporal princes. On every side the smouldering resentment against the strong-handed tyranny of Gregory burst forth, but more particularly in Northern Italy, always inclined to insubordination against Rome, and exasperated at that moment by the severe and relentless breaking up of the wedded homes of the clergy. To these were added other malcontents, full of wrath at Gregory's austere reformation of morals and manners. Thus a synod was assembled at Piacenza, and the abjuration of Worms was enthusiastically adopted by the princes whose foes (the Norman invaders) he had encouraged, by the prelates his arrogance had alienated, and by the licentious his discipline had restrained. Oaths of mysterious significance cemented the conspiracy; acts of overt hostility bore evidence of the determination to push the quarrel to extremes. Not a moment was to be lost in intimating to Gregory VII. that the sceptre of power had fallen from his hands.

It was by this time the second week in Lent, A.D. 1076; Gregory, arrayed in his Pontifical robes, and seated on his throne, sat surrounded by a vast host of ecclesiastical lords and princes at the Vatican. Before these, "Henry, King of Germany and Italy, calling himself Emperor," had been cited as a culprit to await his sentence. In the midst of the ceremonial of the day, as the "Veni, Creator" was on the lips of the Papal choir, Roland, an envoy from the synods of Worms and of

Piacenza, came forward in the midst of the assembled hierarchy of Rome. Instead of the penitent Emperor, a herald had been despatched to announce "the deposition of the Pontiff," and the message was given with curt distinctness.

"The King, and the united Bishops of Germany and Italy, transmit to thee, Gregory, this command: Descend without delay from the throne of Saint Peter; abandon thy usurped government of the Roman Church. To such honours none must aspire without the general choice and the sanction of the Emperor."

Then addressing the assembled conclave: "To you, brethren," he said, "it is commanded that, at the Feast of Pentecost, ye present yourselves before the King, my master, to receive a Pope and Father from his hands. This pretended pastor is a ravenous wolf."¹

A pause of unutterable astonishment gave way to shouts of fury. An indescribable scene ensued, and the bold herald was about to expiate his temerity with his blood, when Gregory, the insulted Pontiff, himself descended with lofty dignity from his throne, received from the hands of Roland the letters of the synod, and read them aloud from his seat, which he had resumed, in a clear and deliberate voice. The same scene of fury was now again renewed, and Roland a second time was in danger of being cut to pieces, but the tumult was at length composed by the voice of the Pontiff. He spoke of the prophecies fulfilled in the "contumacy of kings;" he alluded to the troubles of the Church, and to the avenger's sword, which, whether victory or defeat should be their doom, must be drawn to smite the "arch enemy of God" and his Church. At the side of the Pope sat Agnes, the empress-mother, present there to hear the judgment to be pronounced on her only child. The offended Pontiff, turning to the desolate parent, next raised his eyes to Heaven, as though appealing to it to witness that he performed an imperative duty with a grieving heart. He then invoked the names of Peter and

¹ Essays in Ecclesiastical Biography. By Sir J. Stephens.

Paul, of the Virgin Mary, Mother of God, and all the saints in Heaven, in defence of the Church; and, in the name of the Holy Trinity, and by the power and authority of Peter, he interdicted King Henry, "son of Henry the Emperor," the government of the whole realm of Germany and Italy; absolved all Christians from their oaths of allegiance to him, and bound him with the bond of anathema, "that the nations may know and acknowledge that thou art Peter, and that upon thy Rock the Son of the living God hath built his Church, and that the gates of Hell shall not prevail against it."

The great power of Gregory, his active government, and the certainty that all the proceedings, both at Worms and Piacenza, were perfectly known to him, make us understand the full value of this carefully-prepared scene; but not the less dramatic does it now read to us after eight hundred years; and we can well understand how overpowering must have been its effect over the assembly at the Vatican.

Without losing time, Gregory summoned to the field the great Norman vassals on whom he could rely, and invoked the succour of his Tuscan ally, Matilda, the great, masculine, high-minded countess, whose dauntless bravery and devotion to Gregory have linked her name imperishably in history with his. To this remarkable woman it is painful to observe that the gift of beauty was denied. She is traditionally remembered in the Lucchese as a "Santa donna" (the saintly big woman). A holy, big-boned, sturdy woman, she had but one gentle trait—a fondness for small singing birds; in other respects she was a high-born Joan of Arc. She was the daughter of Boniface the Good, Marquis and Duke of Tuscany, who has also left his name to the narrow strait which separates Corsica from Sardinia, and she inherited his estates under the title of the Great Countess in the year 1054. She died in 1116 in full possession of them. She was first in tutelage, then she reigned with her mother, Beatrice, and during the last thirty-nine years of her life in her own individual right. The only affection of her life was her

reverent passion for Hildebrand, or Gregory VII.; for though twice married—once to Godfrey of Lorraine, and afterwards to Guelph the humpbacked, of Bavaria—she lived a life of absolute celibacy. Matilda adduced her own life and example to enforce on the reluctant priests obedience to the Pontifical decree that annulled their marriages. The glory and advancement of the Church was the only ambition of her long, spotless, and laborious life, and six aged Pontiffs had successively rejoiced over her zeal and devotedness. To Gregory VII. she was counsellor and friend; and she softened by her beaming, though homely countenance, and by her courtly demeanour, something of the harshness and gloom of the Pontifical circle. Even her austere confessor, Anselm of Lucca, enumerates with wonder the number and extent of the burdens and duties that she sustained, without a murmur, in the midst of actual war, when her frame was enfeebled by illness.

When we have made every allowance for the exaggerations of panegyrists, it is certain that the Countess Matilda was one of the most remarkable women of Italy; that her character exactly formed the complement of that of the rugged genius of Gregory; and that it was an unusual coincidence that both should flourish contemporaneously; and be so inseparably linked in the annals of history. The Countess had received an excellent education, and had thus been able to improve her natural abilities. She could address her French and German troops in the native tongues of both; she was a competent Latin scholar; and, most surprising of all in that age, she wrote with her own hand all the letters she despatched to the different kings and princes with whom she corresponded, although, as her confessor deprecatingly observes, “her secretary was always at hand.”

After the Church, her only recreation was the revival of civil law, and she employed Werner the jurist to revise the “*Corpus Juris Civilis*,” and she made her learned and judicious confessor, Anselm, compile a collection of the “*canon law*,” and write a commentary on the

Psalms of David. The study of Scripture was her delight, and we are told that her knowledge of Sacred Writ placed her on an equality with the most learned bishops and theologians of her age. Above all, a halo of magnanimity and of nobleness of mind dwells round the name of the Great Countess ; nothing petty or mean ever was ascribed to her. Warrior, ascetic, and scholar as she was, her qualities of heart even surpassed her mental ones. The refuge of the oppressed, the benefactor of the needy, and the champion of what she sincerely believed to be the truth, she expended her vast wealth in the erection of castles, palaces, convents, and cathedrals, and caused Tuscany to be adorned with statues and public works. Recollections of her survive throughout the land, and chiefly in the Lucchese, where the elegant ruins of a beautiful mediæval palace at Nozzana are still called by her name, besides innumerable fortresses. Tradition ascribes to her the first discovery of the salutary waters of San Casciano, in Valdera,¹ and to the Lucchese peasant she seems a monarch of but yesterday, in so confident a tone does he speak of "La Contessa Matilda."

Wise and prudent, as well as liberal and beneficent, Matilda suffered no dilapidation of her vast resources ; she retained, in spite of her great generosity, the epithet of "rich," which had distinguished her father. Her rule extended over almost all that rich and cultivated region which lies between Lombardy and the Papal States ; and she entered into full possession of power over her hereditary estates at the very time when Henry IV. had convened the Synod of Worms, and obtained from it the sentence of deposition against Gregory VII.

Rash, ignorant, vacillating, and feeble in mind, Henry had not foreseen or calculated on the consequences of his act, and, with his usual infatuated folly, he chose the precise moment of the gathering storm to outrage anew the feelings of his own subjects.

¹ A legend declares that a singing thrush of the Great Countess, afflicted with some malady, bathed in the springs, recovered plumage and song, and taught the value of the waters.

Thus he marched into Saxony, the dearest blood of which had but lately been shed in his vengeance, and, in deliberate scorn of the sentiments of the free German spirit, he enforced a ruthless military despotism, confiscating the estates of the people, exiling the nobles, imprisoning bishops, selling peasants into slavery, and forcing them to labour, under cruel task-masters, on fortresses built for his mercenary troops. But retribution as heavy as the injuries inflicted was now at hand.

As Henry returned to Utrecht from his disastrous triumph over the Saxons, and lay encamped with his courtiers, vassals, and followers, exulting in the agonies of a defeated people, suddenly the averted gaze of some of his suite, and the indignant glances of others, revealed the existence of some mystery.

The Papal interdict had, meantime, fallen like a thunderbolt on the head of the excommunicated monarch, separating him alike from communion with God and with man, condemning him to desolation and abhorrence in this world, and to eternal torments in the world to come.

Henry, however, was not dismayed at first; he was in hopes that the sentence of the Synod of Worms, when publicly known, would shake the faith and divide the opinions of Catholic Christendom. It was agreed that William, Archbishop of Utrecht, should publicly read it from the pulpit. In the year 1075, that prelate, surrounded by a small band of high dignitaries, ascended the archiepiscopal throne, and after commemorating the rising of the Redeemer from the grave, he pronounced a fierce invective against the reigning Pope, whose character and career were pictured in the darkest colours; with bitter scorn the right to censure the Emperor was denied to him, as well as his title to the government of the Church. Then followed the brand of excommunication in the name of the assembled synod, vehemently pronounced by the archbishop. But no sooner were the words uttered than he was stricken with the pangs of death. The prayers and consolations of the Church were in vain proffered to him by the awe-stricken

beholders; agonized in mind and body, he expired in a few minutes. It was afterwards found out, or at least tradition has given it out, that poison had been introduced into the Host by a priest who was aware of the sacrilegious act the archbishop contemplated. But the mere effect on the congregation was necessarily appalling; and chroniclers add that both the church itself and the Emperor's adjacent palace were destroyed by lightning. This did not happen until some time afterwards; but it forms the apposite dramatic end of the powerful tragedy of the scene. Knowing the manners of the day, we are not surprised to hear that Godfrey of Lorraine, the nominal husband of Matilda and the friend of the Emperor, soon perished by the hand of an assassin; and that three anti-Papal prelates, who were present when the act of abjuration was read, were also immediately after removed from this world by poison. But to the simple and superstitious natives of Germany these quick-succeeding deaths seemed direct visitations from Heaven, and it naturally followed that Henry was deserted by his party, when death, mysterious and agonizing, struck all who were most in his confidence. The surviving members of the Synod of Worms fled to Rome to make their peace; the nobles who had so cruelly oppressed the Saxon peasants set them free, and the great feudatories and princes of Germany convened a council to deliberate on the deposition of the sovereign.

Whilst all seemed parting from Henry, he, with undaunted resolution—showing, indeed, a fearlessness and tenacity of will which, under a better education, might have been blessings to himself and to his country—gathered round him all the desperate and fearless adherents willing to risk all in the fortunes of a desperate man, pushed across the north of Germany to encounter the Saxon insurgents, and published to the world the sentence of Utrecht, whilst calling on the Lombard bishops to concur in the excommunication it denounced. At first his daring was not unsuccessful, for though he was repelled by Otho of Saxony, and obliged to retrace

his march to the Rhine, he found every city, village, and convent in the heat of angry controversy between his rights and those of Gregory. But the moral sentiments of the pious, reverent, right-minded people of Germany had been too long alienated by the crimes and violence of Henry for the dispute to last long. Hildebrand had too overwhelming superiority of argument in his favour; his spotless life, his prescriptive position as Pontiff, and his great ability in epistolary addresses to the German prelates caused a decided swerving of the balance in his favour. Addressing the Bishop of Mentz, Herman, for example, he says :¹ "Such as from exceeding folly deny the Papal right of excommunicating kings hardly deserve an answer." (The right to depose kings was the real point of the debate.) "Yet, in consideration to their weakness, we will dispel their doubts. Peter himself had taught this doctrine, as appeared by a letter from St. Clement." (A letter now known to be spurious.) "When Pepin coveted the crown of Childeric, Pope Zachary was invited by the Mayor of the Palace to give judgment between them. On his ambiguous award, the usurper had founded the title of his dynasty. Saint Gregory the Great had threatened to depose any monarch who should resist his desires. The story of Ambrose and Theodosius, rightly interpreted, gave proof that the Emperor held his crown at the will of the Apostle. Every king was one of the 'sheep' whom Peter had been commanded to feed, and one of the 'things' which Peter had been empowered to bind. Who could presume to place the sceptre on a level with the crosier. The one was the conquest of human pride, the other the gift of Divine mercy; the one conducting to the vain glories of earth, the other pointing the way to Heaven. As gold surpasses lead, so does the episcopal transcend the imperial dignity. Could Henry justly refuse to the Universal Bishop that precedence which Constantine had yielded to the meanest prelate at Nicæa? Must he not be supreme above

¹ Hildebrand, page 34, *Essays in Ecclesiastical Biography*. Sir J. Stephens.

all terrestrial thrones to whom all ecclesiastical dominations are subordinate ? ”

Arguments like these were naturally convincing to the class who might look forward to the enjoyment of this despotism, both in heaven and earth, but religious threats and the terrors of ignorance and superstition were necessary, before the patriotism and loyalty of the sturdy burghers and homely peasants of Germany, could be brought to depose their hereditary sovereign. Accordingly a reiterated series of Pontifical denunciations were launched from Rome across the Alps, and in the year 1076, a rescript was published, which required the German princes and prelates, counts and barons, to elect a new emperor in the event of Henry's continued resistance to the sentence of the last Papal Council ; and gave the assurance of the Apostolic confirmation of any choice which should be worthily made. Legates speedily arrived at Tribur, on the Rhine, to conduct the deliberations of the diet summoned there.

A more solemn and majestic scene of national judgment on a criminal sovereign has never been beheld. It was then autumn, and the happy peasantry were gathering in the plenteous harvests and the vintage ; whilst under a pavilion, raised in the centre of a smiling plain, the judges of the earth had met to depose an erring and infamous monarch.

The surrounding eminences were occupied by the retainers and soldiers of the great dignitaries of the Empire, each body separated from its neighbour by the floating banner of its lord.

On the opposite side of the majestic Rhine, Henry and his adherents awaited the sentence to be passed on him for his crimes as a sovereign, as a man, and as a son of the Church.

From the records which remain of the Diet of Tribur, it would appear that Henry's ecclesiastical offences were treated in the lightest possible manner, a significant trait of the national jealousy of the Roman interference ; but his civil acts as Emperor were enumerated and arraigned

with the most dispassionate justice, and well-deserved severity. Soldiers were even despatched to secure his person; and he might have had to endure the last personal humiliations, had he not volunteered to abdicate all power into the hands of the great vassals, reserving for himself solely his title of Emperor.

After seven days of protracted negotiation, the apple of discord Henry had thus thrown, with a dexterity worthy of Gregory's self, amongst his enemies was accepted, with a few modifications proposed by the legates.

The Pope was invited to hold a diet at Augsburg in the following spring. He was, in the interim, to decide whether Henry was, or was not, to be restored to the communion of the Church. If he were, then, as a sovereign, he was to reassume his Imperial rights; should, however, the sun set upon him whilst still an excommunicated man, on the 23rd of February, 1077, his crown was to be transferred to another. Until then he was to reside at Spire, with the title of Emperor, but without a Court, army, or permission to attend public worship.

The apparent triumph of Gregory, however incomplete, was great; but it must be borne in mind that at an earlier stage of the career of the criminal and violent Henry, his barons and feudatories had already convened a diet at Worms, to depose him; and Rudolf, of Swabia, was on the very eve of election to supersede him.

His career ever since then, so far from becoming more humane and just, had only increased in sanguinary folly and in crime. The part, therefore, that strikes the observer is, not that a partial success was won when all the force of Rome was flung into the scale with the notorious unworthiness of Henry to reign, but that the innate sense of national honour and independence should have been strong enough to afford Gregory so undecided a victory, even though he had bribed the Germans to choose another Emperor, by promising to approve of him.

The steady sense of national justice and of freedom,

which marks the proceedings at Tribur in so remote an age, conveys a great lesson and demands warm admiration.

When the results of the Diet of Tribur were known, the city of Rome, as was but natural, gave way to frantic and exultant joy, believing herself on the eve of once more governing the world.

Great and salutary lessons of abandonment, solitude, and contempt, now fell heavily on the forsaken exile of Spires—a man, as it were, cut off from all communion with his kind. His sole consolation was Bertha, his gentle, devoted, pious wife; and his hours were past between penitential exercises and fruitless endeavours to be permitted to appear at Rome as a suppliant. Two months passed away, and it wanted but ten weeks of the term when, if still excommunicated, Henry must forfeit even his crown. With that dauntless courage which had so often availed him in his worst straits, he resolved on the last step of heroic perseverance. In the frightful severity of a winter that froze the Rhine for four consecutive months, he set out in a pilgrim's garb, along with his faithful wife, who bore their infant child in her arms, to submit himself to Gregory. The Princes through whose domains they had to pass, behaved with cowardly brutality, refusing them even a safe conduct. The mother of his wife, far from compassionating her daughter, exacted large concessions of territory, ere she permitted them to pass through her states, to cross one of the great mountain barriers (most likely that of the Great St. Bernard) between the Empire and Italy. But the gentler peasantry alleviated their sufferings; and, with rude humanity, wrapped Bertha and her babe in the hides of newly-slaughtered cattle, to save their lives from the cold, as they were let down precipices by cords, or by frail rope ladders (the magnanimity and devotion of these hardy mountaineers had provided for the safety of the lonely pilgrims in the icy wildernesses of the Alps). And no sooner did the royal pilgrims espy the smiling plains of Italy, than the rapturous welcome of the great

Lombard feudatory chiefs cheered once more their broken hearts.

Lombardy detested Gregory, and longed for the restoration of the "See of Ambrose." The whole population, therefore, gladly succoured Henry and Bertha, and placed them in a safe abode, from whence the Emperor might continue his negotiations with the Pope.

Meantime, the "Great Countess," in the personal command of a strong military force, attended the Papal progress, when the tidings of Henry's appearance in Italy made her retreat to Canossa, in the Apennines, the cradle of her ancient race, and her own favourite residence.

When George VII. sought refuge within the walls of Canossa it was already crowded with the mitred penitents from Germany. The softness of charity and of chivalrous courtesy was not known at that period; every man inflicted on his prostrate enemy the coarsest fare, the most scanty rations, the most loathsome dungeons, the most ignominious personal humiliations. Gregory VII., sprung from the humblest class of the peasantry, had none of that innate generosity which respects the dignity of manhood in a fallen foe; the most frightful severities were heaped on the suppliant ecclesiastics. Nor is there any record of the Great Countess having interposed any offices of womanly kindness in softening the rigour of the Pope.

To crown his triumph with something of the savage glee with which the base-born contemplate the personal sufferings of the aristocracy, Gregory summoned Henry to Canossa, in the most inclement days of January, when the earth was thickly shrouded with snow. The penitent was clad merely in a linen robe; at the second portal of the vast populous fortress he was, however, stopped, and refused admittance. For three days during that dreadful winter weather did the inhuman Vice-Regent of the gentle and merciful Jesus, keep his enemy exposed to the blasts of the snowy mountains, without food, drink, or raiment. It is no apology for Gregory VII. that the

cruelties of the Emperor to the Saxons had made him well merit a taste of the sufferings he had inflicted ; for the Normans had been quite as savage and as sacrilegious, both in England and in Southern Italy, and we do not hear of their being treated with the same unutterable and arrogant insults. The stain on the otherwise glorious character of Gregory VII. must ever be the personal self-idolatry which made him deaf to humanity, blind to reason, and insensible to the spirit of Christianity. He rather resembled some ferocious ancient Hebrew prophet than a minister of the Saviour of mankind.

After human nature could resist no more suffering of body and torture of mind (for to the shame of the Pontiff, it must be remembered that, down to the meanest servitor of the great multitudes, all were permitted and encouraged to heap insults and contumely upon the Imperial penitent) Henry was admitted into the presence of the aged man "from the terrible glance of whose eye," we are told, "beholders recoiled as from the lightning." Prostrate at his feet Henry wept, confessed his sins, and implored mercy ; and after that, and under the heaviest conditions, the Pope consented to revoke the anathema of the Vatican.

The conditions imposed upon Henry may well cause us to doubt that knowledge of mankind, with which priests are usually supposed to be endowed ; they would rather seem dictated by the same insane arrogance which had prompted the previous treatment of the Emperor, and added to that, a deliberate design to drive him into another rebellion. They were as follows.

Henry was to submit himself to the future judgment of the Apostolic See ; to resign his crown should that judgment be unfavourable to him ; to abstain in the meantime from the enjoyment of any of his Royal prerogatives or revenues. He was to acknowledge that his subjects had been lawfully released from their allegiance ; to banish his former advisers and to govern his states should he ever regain them, "in obedience to Papal councils." He was to enforce all Pontifical decrees,

and never to take vengeance for his present humiliation.

After all these conditions had been imposed and accepted, Gregory VII., holding in his hand the consecrated wafer, exclaimed, addressing Henry :—" Behold the body of our Lord ! Be it this day the witness of my innocence. May the Almighty God now free me from the suspicion of the guilt, of which I have been accused by thee and thine, if I be really innocent ; may He this instant strike me with a sudden death, if I be guilty." Here the Pontiff partook of the Sacrament ; after which, turning solemnly to the conscience-stricken Monarch, he said : " If thou art conscious of thine innocence, and assured that the charges brought against thee by thine own opponents are false and calumnious, free the Church of God from scandal and thyself, and take as an appeal to Heaven the Body of our Lord."

With the spirit of true penitence for once in his heart, Henry had the virtue to decline the test, and after this last impressive scene, the Papal benediction was accorded him, and a banquet offered to him.

The guilt of perjury to conditions like the foregoing, will be the least of the crimes which stain the memory of Henry. He left the presence chamber of the Pope and the castle of Canossa with rage in his heart and a burning desire for revenge, with which every one must ardently sympathise. His own age certainly did so, and as soon as the scene of Canossa was made public, his cause was stronger than ever. Of course he disregarded all the promises extorted from him, and henceforth devoted all his energies to relentless, unmitigated hostility to the Pope. We are rather lost in speculation how, under such circumstances, Gregory maintained comparative moderation towards him. By his own unteachable folly and headstrong violence, Henry subsequently lost his crown, which was given to Rudolf of Swabia ; but another turn of the popular favour replaced the sceptre in Henry's hand, and he recovered in battle no inconsiderable part of his former dominions. With all the prestige

of victory, he crossed the Alps, and ere the summer of 1080 set in, the German standards were descried bearing down on Rome.

Then began the dramatic series of events which for ever enchain our interest in the last act of Gregory VII.'s eventful career. Then commenced that parallel decline of his personal power which we may compare to the retreat from Moscow of his great equal. The protracted siege of Rome called forth all the energies, fortitude, and the finest qualities of the Pope. He was supported by the Romans with the energy of despair, and against them they had the German feeling of outraged patriotism, the personal revenge of Henry, and the cordial detestation of the Northern Italians, who had always abhorred Hildebrand first, and then Gregory VII.

Finally, in the spring of 1084, the Romans were overpowered, and the Imperialists burst into the city.

Then had Gregory to drink the bitter cup he had so often forced on others; he was obliged to seek a precarious shelter in the castle of St. Angelo, whilst Guibert of Brixen, under the title of Clement III., seated on the Pontifical Throne in the great Basilica of the Lateran, crowned Henry and Bertha Emperor of Germany and King of Italy.

At that very moment, from the old Appian Way by which the first Apostles had entered heathen Rome, came an earthly champion to the Pope. Robert Guiscard, returning from Constantinople, bore onwards with a mighty and mingled host of Saracens and of Christians, and before this overwhelming army the Emperor was compelled to retreat. But retribution—and retribution which fell most heavily on the great flaw of Gregory's almost perfect character—now awaited him. The rescue of Robert Guiscard brought him but a momentary gleam of hope. He made, it is true, a triumphant return to the Lateran; but a few hours afterwards the city was wrapped in flame, in carnage, in ruin. The Normans, Saracens, and Imperialists, joined in one common and savage fray, and Gregory had to undergo all the agonies

of horror, of wrath, and of compassion for the victims he could not save. To him, the austere and spotless prelate, it was given to hear the shrieks of consecrated virgins, to see the infidel revelling in blood—and worse, in the holiest sanctuaries of the Faith; to see the bright glare of conflagration consume his best-loved altars; and, worst of all, to feel how many rejoiced in his retributive shame.

Every convent was violated, every church desecrated, two-thirds of the city were laid in ruins, and Gregory was compelled to retreat to Salerno under the protection of the Normans.

Weighed down by years and by grief, he soon felt his end approaching, and the majestic spirit which (though obscured by self-idolatry) had always dwelt within him, awoke with the serenity of his gigantic intellect on the verge of the grave.

If some doubts of many of his acts may have passed his mind, he may have deemed, as all who read this record must, that his sins had been more than expiated. He summoned his attendant bishops and cardinals round his dying couch, passed in review before them his actions, his life, and the great aims that had guided both; named three immediate successors to the Papacy; assured his weeping friends of his intercession for them at the Throne of Grace; blessed, forgave, and absolved all his enemies except Henry and the Anti-Pope; and, after making his peace with God, and receiving the Sacraments, he laid himself out to die, exclaiming, as a farewell to life, “I have loved righteousness and hated iniquity, and therefore I die in exile.”

One really feels an affection for the honest human sincerity of this immortal man, when one finds him excluding from his forgiveness the only two persons to whom it could be of any value, and in his indignant protest against the justice of his fate.

To the last may be continued the parallel: in the declarations from Elba; in their stormy lives; supreme exaltation; wild despotism and deep decline—these must ever

recur to the human mind as twin spirits in immortality.

The fate of Henry, though of infinitely less moment, may be given in a few words. On his precipitate retreat from Rome, with a small disorderly force, he was attacked in crossing the domains of the Great Countess by her troops, and though he did not fall in the fight, nor yet was made prisoner, he lost so many men and so much treasure that he was effectually disabled from ever returning to Italy.

His reign in Germany was henceforth undisturbed by civil wars; but though Otho of Nordheim, the hero of Saxony, was dead, and Herman, of Luxemburg, who had succeeded Rudolf, of Swabia, abdicated in his favour, still, the consequences of his crimes and follies, and of his contempt for human and divine laws, fell heavily on his later years. He was engaged in renewed conflicts with the Papacy, and as neither his heart nor his conduct had been amended, he expired of grief at the parricidal cruelty of his son, and his end was unhallowed by the comforts of religion, or by the prayers of the Church.

Henry had not one redeeming trait—unless, perhaps, indomitable personal courage may be considered such: and the end of this reprobate and unteachable monarch inspires neither regret nor compassion.

The genius of Hildebrand rules the Church even now in all the conflicts with the civil power. His great realisation of the vision of St. Augustine can readily be traced. If succeeding Pontiffs had maintained the lofty standard of personal virtue of this great man, their empire would probably have been eternal—eternal, not in the assertion, but in the practice and exercise of despotism; but, like every other earthly institution, time has proved its resistless enemy. Although leagued with the civil power, Europe and South America were entirely subject to the literal execution of the plans of Hildebrand, and though these were enforced by the most savage butcheries, the most relentless persecutions by fire, by confiscation, by poison, by every rigour of the civil and

every power of ecclesiastical law, we have beheld it break asunder in every country hitherto considered its impregnable stronghold. There is one enemy stronger even than prepotent genius. That enemy is time. Spain, Italy, and Austria—even sluggish and slothful Austria—have awoken, and protest, with the energy of a novel revelation of the imprescriptible rights of man, against the civil usurpations of the priesthood—against the fetters of human reason. But not for that is the lesson to be derived from the life of Hildebrand the less impressive; the stamp of genius is on it; and though the temporal despotism he sought to establish has failed, yet the spiritual example he set, and the ecclesiastical code he laid down, will last until friends and foes alike are summoned before a tribunal where an impartial award will be passed upon the errors and upon the virtues of both.

CHAPTER VIII.

The Crusades—A new Impulse is given to the Civilization of the West.

THE great crusading movement which took possession of Europe brought about the first complete and organic change in society, which can be remarked after the cessation of mere barbarism.

Every class of all the populations of Western Europe was then brought into contact with all ranks of the inhabitants of new countries, new climates, new productions. New modes of warfare, of religious worship, and of thought, and even of the modes of writing, were introduced.¹

A more splendid and subtle genius of civilization was observed (as offered by the Eastern cities). The Crusaders beheld, and traversed, in their journeys to and from the Holy Land, cities affording them opportunities of acquiring that knowledge of the world and of mankind which awoke in them the latent powers of thought, and of the art of government. A new polity was brought about amongst the heretofore semi-savage Northerners.

The noble genius of Hildebrand had, among his other vast ideas, formed a project of uniting the forces of the Western Christians against the Mahomedans, and of recovering Palestine from the Infidels.

A passion for pilgrimages to the Holy Shrine had been prevalent since the early ages of Christianity, and the universal belief at the close of the tenth century that the Day of Judgment was at hand, gave even a greater impulse to this fervour and irresistible longing for piety and adventures.

The "Thousand Years" of St. John were then believed to have been accomplished, and a convulsive restlessness seized mankind, as the end of the world was supposed to

¹ The Oriental mode was long deemed *Magic*.

be at hand. Men pledged their estates, forsook their homes, threw down high public offices, and flocked to Jerusalem, where the Lord was to appear to judge the quick and the dead.

Whilst Palestine continued in the possession of the Caliphs, they had (partly, no doubt, from motives of interest) rather encouraged than impeded the passage of pilgrims to Jerusalem: the latter brought treasures in gold and silver to the domains of the unbeliever, and when, with consciences relieved, they departed, they carried away nothing more valuable than relics and consecrated toys. But when the Turks (a fierce Tartar tribe, which had embraced the religion of the Moslem) conquered Syria, about the middle of the eleventh century, pilgrimages became dangerous, and pilgrims were exposed to outrages of every kind.

This change happened at the very juncture when the prevailing panic aroused in Europe drew the greatest number of pilgrims to the Holy Land. The details of their sufferings, and of the vexations and wrongs (too often tortures) inflicted on them by the Turks, inspired their Christian brethren with terror, indignation and surprise.

Whilst the minds of men were thus impressed, a monk known as Peter the Hermit, a native of Amiens, in Picardy, revived the project first mooted by Hildebrand of sending the forces of Western Christendom to fight the Infidel, and, if possible, to sweep their hated presence from the land.

Urban II., who had at first been uncertain of the success of the project, summoned a council at Placentia, A.D. 1095; it was held in the open fields, no hall being found large enough to contain the overflowing multitudes who attended it. Four thousand ecclesiastics and above thirty thousand laymen were there present. All declared in favour of the enterprise, and evinced an enthusiastic ardour in its pursuit. But it was only after the Council of Clermont, in Auvergne, had been assembled the same year, 1095, attended by the highest prelates, nobles, and princes of the West, that, after the Pope and Peter the

Hermit had each in turn concluded an eloquent appeal to the religious enthusiasm of all present, the spirit of the whole assembly seemed at once roused to a sudden frenzy of inspiration, and, with highly wrought feelings, all proclaimed (as by unanimous assent) the well-known words, "It is the will of God! It is the will of God!" These words, echoed and repeated throughout that vast multitude, produced the effect of doom. They were assumed as the motto on the sacred standard, whilst the cross was borne in token of union by the companions of the enterprise; it was to be affixed to the right shoulder, and hence the enterprise derived the name of "Crusade."

At this juncture persons of all ranks flew to arms with an incredible ardour. Kings and princes, nobles and their followers, ecclesiastics, even men of humble and pacific pursuits, and women disguised in male attire, engaged in the sacred cause. Criminals considered this expedition as an expiatory journey, a *via Crucis*, in the course of which their sins would be remitted. If we believe the testimony of contemporary writers, six millions of persons assumed the holy badge. "All Europe," says the Princess Anna Comnena, "torn up from its roots, seemed ready to precipitate itself in one united body upon Asia."¹

During two centuries the fever continued to rage with more or less intensity throughout the mind of Europe. To recover and keep possession of the Holy Land was the prevailing rage. It became the cause of deep and terrible dissensions between the Popes and the highest potentates of Western Europe. It caused the sacrifice of vast armies, and of nearly all the private interests of every family of name, and effected a thorough revolution in society at large.

The efforts of valour and religious enthusiasm brought about prodigies, by calling into play qualities heretofore unsuspected and unknown to their possessors, who naturally ascribed them to special interpositions of the Deity, the Saints, and the Virgin; and the romantic

¹ Alexias, Lib. x., ap. Byz. Script., Vol. xi. p. 224.

legends which survive throughout Europe, and of which the "Crusader" is always the hero, have a fascination, even now, which almost equals that of the *Iliad*. But the impartial historian cannot but question, if the cause of Christianity and of morality was benefited by the crimes, the avarice, the faithlessness, and the savage cruelties which stained the career of these champions of the Cross, and which rendered ineffectual all their efforts to establish a Christian supremacy, in a land and climate where the conqueror acquired and exceeded the vices of the conquered.

During the period of the Crusades, all Syria and Palestine were wrested from the Turks, and the banner of the Cross was displayed on Mount Zion. Constantinople, the eastern capital of Christianity, was seized and barbarously pillaged by the Crusaders, and the Earl of Flanders and his descendants kept possession, for half a century, of the Imperial throne.

Meantime, the sight of new countries, and contact with new peoples (many of whom were more polished than themselves) brought an unforeseen change on the social condition of Europe. In their progress towards the Holy Land, the Crusaders traversed countries far in advance of their own. Their first place of meeting was generally in Italy, in which several thriving cities, as Venice, Genoa, Pisa, and others, had begun to apply themselves energetically to commerce and the industrial arts. At some one or other of the many Italian maritime ports they embarked, and landed in Dalmatia, whence they pursued their route to Constantinople. The latter city, as we must remember, though often severely injured by conflagrations, had never been subjected to the destructive rage of barbarians; and therefore preserved, unimpaired by the violence of man, its queenly beauty, gorgeous treasures, luxury, elegance, and all the impressive distinctions of manners and of dress. Manufactures of curious and costly textures were carried on in its centre; brocaded silks; webs of transparent texture, enriched with gems and exquisite needle-

work, fabrics of delicate taste and splendour, were piled in her marts, for Constantinople was the only European emporium for the muslins, the tissues, the dyes, and the fragrant woods and perfumes of the East Indies; and we may be sure the fairy-like gossamer novelties were not unappreciated by the innumerable ladies who swelled the ranks of the Crusaders. Above all, in the general intellectual darkness and gross ignorance of Western Europe, in Constantinople only had survived a taste for letters, and the polish and refinement which mental cultivation seldom fails to create; so that the sight and civilization of Constantinople seem, from the glowing narratives of contemporary historians, to have struck dumb with bewilderment the ruder Crusaders, who, on their side, with their uncouth appearance, savage manners, grotesque superstitions (those of the Rhine), besides the banner "of the Cross and the Virgin," marching under the protection of a hog, a goat, and a donkey; and their lawless gratification of the animal propensities of drink and food, filled the more dignified and cultivated Byzantians with horror and disgust.

As Constantinople became the place of rendezvous for all the armies of the Crusaders, the peoples of the East and West met there as at a congress of nations. The Greek historians, who witnessed the scene, describe the Franks as "barbarians, fierce, illiterate, impetuous, and savage," assuming themselves the tone of a civilized and literary people, acquainted with the science of government, and with arts, of which the military hordes were ignorant. Anna Comnena¹ alludes to the "*Latin*" (applying this generic term to their religious element) as "a rude people, the very mention of the name of which was sufficient to contaminate the beauty and elegance of history." Others² inveigh against them with still greater violence, describing their ferocity and devastations in terms such as the preceding historians employed in describing the incursions of the "Goths and Vandals."

¹ Alexias, p. 224, 231, 237, ap. Byz. Script., Vol. xi.

² Nicetas Choniates, ap. Byz. Script. Vol. iii., p. 302.

On the other hand, the "Latin" historians all join in expressing their ravishment at the magnificence, wealth, and elegance they witnessed in the capital of the Eastern Empire.

They speak of "the vastness of Constantinople," of the "many noble monasteries and beautiful palaces, all built with wonderful art;" of "the numberless manufactures in the city, amazing to behold;" as well as of other good things in which it abounds—"gold, silver and stuffs of various kinds," for, it is added, "every hour ships arrive in its port laden with all things necessary for the use of man."¹

Willermus, Archbishop of Tyre, the most intelligent historian of the crusades, is not less enthusiastic in his description of the eloquence and splendour met with at Constantinople, and of its Court; and adds that, "what they observed there, exceeded any idea which they could have formed of it."² Lastly, a nobleman of the highest rank, Geoffrey de Villehardouin, accustomed to all the magnificence then known in the Courts of the West, describes the admiration of such of his companions who beheld the city of Constantinople for the first time. "They could not have believed that there was a city so beautiful and so rich in the whole world! When they viewed its lofty walls, high towers, and splendid churches, all appeared so great, that they could have formed no conception of this sovereign city unless they had seen it with their own eyes."³

It must be kept in mind, at this important point, that, even at that time amongst the rude barbarous peoples of the West, the Italians and the descendants of the Greco-Italians alone possessed the superiority of civilization above the rest, which they had never entirely lost. Moreover, the example of the civilization of Byzantium had been partly communicated to them, by their unceasing commercial and maritime traffic.

¹ Fulcherius Carnotensis, *Fulcheri ap. Bougars*, Vol. i., p. 386.

² *Nostrarum enim rerum modum et dignitatem excedunt*. Willerm. Tyre.

³ *Histoire de la Conquete de Constantinople*, p. 49.

A French historian of the Holy Wars appears to have been struck by this difference in the character and manners of the Italians,¹ and by their superiority in their "love of liberty and civil wisdom."

Highly practical on the one hand, and on the other with more vivid perceptions of the beauty of proportion and of form (the basis of all true artistical excellence), the Italians brought from the East far more graceful, intelligent and expressive perceptions of the fine arts than any other nation; and the first and best samples of these in the West were due to them.

The Monastic Orders, who, at a later period, penetrated to the furthestmost regions of Tartary, and found there a ceremonial of rites so exactly like their own (that they explained it by a special interposition of Satan to bring confusion amongst the believers), came to the aid of civilization during the Crusades. During their missions from Rome they became acquainted with the process of many manufactures and useful arts, sealed secrets to the great mass of mankind, as well as with the exquisite and difficult art of *illuminating manuscripts*, and many of the laws of chemistry, and of astronomy (debased then, as later, too often by the superstitions of astrology). These beneficial and peaceful conquests on barbarism, the Monastic Orders, and the merchants and laymen who accompanied the Crusaders, were able to carry out, on their return to Europe, by the superiority which prescriptive respect, and the experience of men and manners, never fails to give a privileged order, exactly at the moment when ignorance begins to awaken to the feeling that life has higher aims than mere earthly enjoyments. And yet, two hundred years after the first Crusade, we find in ancient French *charters* such and such an one: "ne sachant pas écrire, attendu sa qualité

¹ Jacobus de Vetrico. "In consiliis circumspecti, in re sua publica procuranda diligentes et studiosi, sibi in posterum providentes; aliis subijci renuentes; ante omnia libertatem sibi defendentes; sub uno quem eligunt Capitaneo, communitate sua jura et instituta dictantes et similiter observantes."—*Histor. Hierosol. ap. Gesta Dei per Francos*, Vol. ii., p. 1085.

de gentilhomme"—whilst at Constantinople, when the Crusaders first reached it, the very highest of the Byzantine nobles registered their names as privileged "to copy the manuscripts of the classics and of the Fathers!"

We have a faint idea of the extent and number of the "missions" from the writings of a learned Frenchman.¹ Whilst he describes a "Mongolian Embassy," received at the French Court at the time of St. Louis, he refers to crowds of Italian, French, and Flemish monks sent from Rome on diplomatic missions to the Grand Khan of Tartary; and in return Mongolian grandees, of the first order, would visit Rome, Barcelona, Valencia, Lyons, Paris, and even London, and so far as the province of Northampton.

We need hardly add that the most surprising adventures attended these journeys, and that their dangers and fatigues were brightened by many legendary "*miracles*;" and often rendered more gloomy by "demoniac" agencies. The rewards to perseverance and enterprise, however, even in this world, were very great, for the most humble adventurers frequently rose to the greatest wealth and eminence; and we hear of an obscure Neapolitan friar becoming Archbishop of Pekin.²

Besides the advantages resulting from foreign travel, from the blending of races and the fusion of ideas, the Crusades effected another fundamental change in the condition of society in Western Europe—the alienation, sale, and mortgage of the vast feudal tenures and allodial domains which preceded and followed these expeditions. The immense migrations of great nobles and their followers to the East, whither they were allured by all the charms which ever attract towards the brilliant and sun-lit South, demanded above all things ready money—that most scarce of commodities in uncom-

¹ M. Abel de Remusat.

² M. Abel de Remusat, *Mémoires sur les Relations Politiques des Princes Chrétiens avec les Empereurs Mongols*.

mercial territories. The Jew and the Lombard were ever willing to advance what was immediately necessary, and to promise more. The scanty notices that remain prove to us the exorbitant rates of interest at which these sums were placed. The great abbeys, too, probably the wealthiest agricultural corporations ever known, were at hand to purchase, or to grant annuities on seigneurial fiefs, the owners of which were willing to try fortune in a brighter clime; consequently the land was parcelled out into smaller holdings. The men who remained unmoved by the whirlwind of fashion, fanaticism, and ambition, were precisely those unobtrusive, but calm and steady votaries of rational improvements, of which half savage countries stand so much in need to till the soil, plant the orchard, erect the mill, and seek for the mine. Accordingly we soon begin to discern an era of relative improvement in all useful arts in France, immediately after the first Crusade.

Besides this, the experiences of the Crusaders, under circumstances fair or foul, as they struggled towards the East, were calculated to bridge over the chasm which had hitherto existed between lord and vassal, a chasm, even under the Christian dispensation, which we can hardly now conceive, and could hardly credit, but for the unquestioned written evidence of law, and the still more undeniable traces of its worst features which have but recently been redeemed at great personal sacrifices, even in Italy believed to be the foster-mother of civilization.¹

The life of the serf existed then pretty much at the mercy or will of his lord. He might be tortured without a question being asked, or plundered without a word of sympathy. Centuries after the first Crusade, one of the demands of the serfs in the "peasant war" of Germany was "the free permission to commit suicide"; that is, that the family and property of the *suicide* should not suffer by

¹ The feudal rights, in all their revolting brutality, were in full force in the Abruzzi under the late king, and the women of Campobasso ransomed themselves formally for half a million of francs.

this act. Nothing can add force or significance to this pathetic and despairing appeal.

In Poland, where the feudal laws pressed longest, and with most savage weight, remote from the observation and example of the rest of Europe, we find that in the most ardent moments of patriotism, *liberty* only signified *the power of a privileged class*. We may therefore form some faint relative idea of Europe in the Middle Ages, when serfdom was an institution of society considered as natural as domestic free service is now.

It has been often remarked—but the remark scarcely yet has acquired the attention it merits—that we judge more accurately of people by the praises they receive than by the censures. When we find actions which are now performed as a matter of course exalted to the very heavens, “as the heroic of human magnanimity and virtue,” we cannot but consider the ordinary standard must have been brutal and low, even in the days of chivalry, beyond anything in our times. Such praises as poets and chroniclers heap upon the “lights” of the Dark and Middle Ages, would seem affronts to any ordinary gentleman of the nineteenth century. It was, however, in the Crusades that the first symptoms of the breaking down of barriers between master and serf were seen. For common sufferings and pestilence were too often shared by the noble and his most humble yeoman’s servitor: the ties of gossipred or fosterhood are also gracefully mixed with romance and annals of those adventurous days. The foster-brother of some princess, or lady of high lineage, is often cited as being “faithful,” when all around had fled from fear of plague, or famine, or captivity.

It is also probable that the fearful retribution which the crimes and vices of the Crusaders brought upon the cause, awoke a deeper and truer sense of Christianity and of the common brotherhood, which is its fundamental point of difference from the heathen belief, and engraved a livelier and more vital sense of the moral and active obligations of religion in the hearts of devout and gentle

nurture, leading them to perceive how inefficacious, under the temptations of life, is a mere, crude, boisterous, ferocious, and fanatical zeal in professing "faith," even in the dogmas of Christianity.

It is certain that from about this period a marked improvement dawns on the mind of chroniclers. And the traces of a deeper communion between the spirit of man and the gentle beauties of nature are discerned, rising to a more just comprehension of the benevolent bounty of the Creator.

Despotism in Asia had from time immemorial, it is true, been honourably distinguished by establishments of lavish extent for the relief of sickness and indigence. The most abject of the poor shared the shelter of the Khan and of the fountain on his travels; and vast hospitals for different diseases have always been found throughout the kingdoms of Asia. But it may be truly asserted, that until the first Crusade the imperative duties we owe to our fellow-creatures, in want and in sickness, had not reached the understandings of the arrogant and fierce Western Christians.

Palestine and Syria, a kind of midway land between Europe and Asia (and sacred to the religious belief of both) had, however, been hallowed by the presence, and benefited by the existence of enlightened holy men, who interpreted the doctrines of Christ in acts of fraternal charity, dedicating their labours of teaching and their personal services to the benefit of the unhappy, the sick and the poor.

The first examples of those great asylums, called by the kindly term of "hospices," where the houseless pilgrim and the ailing traveller could find rescue and aid, are met with in the East. The splendid Hospice of Cæsarea, founded by St. Basil in the year A.D. 370-71, was the first example of these asylums.

So active was the charity of that great man, in behalf of the leper especially, that it touched the heart of the Emperor Valentinus, who, though of the Arian creed, placed the revenues of Cæsarea at the disposal of St. Basil

for the relief of the leprous patients assembled under his care.

We are told by St. Gregory Nazianzen,¹ that this hospital was so airy, vast, and commodious, as to resemble a "small city." Parted off into several sections, it afforded relief to the needy, the sick, and the leprous, who were thus "removed from the sight, and contempt, and loathing of the world," for leprosy was long believed, and especially in the Levant, to be a direct castigation from the Deity, as a retribution for heinous crimes, and was therefore considered, not as a malady we may all share by the common laws of nature, but as a *penance*, attesting the sufferer to have been guilty of enormous wickedness.

It was due to the intelligence and humanity of St. Basil that these unfortunates were recognised in their true light of "sufferers" from a mysterious and awful malady, and yet one within the competence of human care and tenderness to soothe, and often to cure.

Other Eastern cities soon followed the enlightened example initiated in Cæsarea, and the asylums for the leprous were placed under the titular protection of St. Lazarus, whilst their attendants followed the rule of St. Basil. Several important "Lazar-houses" and hospices were found flourishing in Jerusalem when the city fell into the hands of the Crusaders. Indeed it deserves to be remarked, to the honour of the Saracens, and of almost all Asiatic nations, that institutions of pure benevolence, of whatever creed, command their approbation and respect, and the person of the physician—"the healer"—is almost sacred in their eyes.

A fine hospital for pilgrims had been established at Jerusalem, near the Holy Sepulchre, by an enterprising company of merchants from Amalfi, who carried on a commercial intercourse between Italy and Syria, and had obtained permission from the Caliph of Egypt to erect this useful abode contiguous to a monastery.

This hospice received "pilgrims," and gave refuge to

¹ Gregor. Nazianzen. Orat. 20.

the sick. It was dedicated to "St. John the Almsgiver" (*Limosiniere*), and placed under the superintendence of a superior, under whose control the general administration of the hospital was conducted.

This office of *spedalingo*, or superior of a hospital, was an honour conferred upon men of great civil abilities, piety, and discretion. When it was not held by an ecclesiastic, it was justly considered in Italy to be an honourable and highly responsible office. The lists of the "spedalinghi" of Santa Maria Nuova remain to attest the post was filled by the highest and best Florentine names. We cannot forget that of the Portinari.

After the conquest of Jerusalem by the Crusaders, these Hospitallers were divided into three classes. One class, under the title of the Military Order of "St. John of Jerusalem," took arms in defence of the pilgrims and of the oppressed, and became a strong support to the community of Christians. Another class of these Hospitalers served the pilgrims, and attended on the infirm. A third class, under ecclesiastical orders, ministered to the spiritual concerns of the congregation. All rendered active and excellent service to the cause of humanity and civilization by the performance of works of charity, and Pope Pascal II. raised them to the honours of a Military Order.

To the Knights Hospitallers of *St. John* were added those of the *Holy Sepulchre*, the *Templars*, and the Knights of the *Madonna degl' Alemanni*, better known as the Order of the *Teutonic Knights*. There were many others enumerated at the time, but the four we have mentioned have survived the comparative obscurity into which these latter have fallen.

In the year 1112 another great hospital was erected in Jerusalem under the titular protection of St. John the Baptist; and thus to the sentiment of fraternal charity initiated by the Eastern Christians, the West responded by an alliance of chivalrous ardour and religious enthusiasm, which often rose to a state of frenzy.

The institutions of chivalry are first heard of during

the era of Charlemagne, but, they assumed vast importance during the Crusades; and the orders we have enumerated became very powerful and privileged corporations.

After Godfrey de Bouillon had taken possession of Jerusalem, Baldwin, the first king of the city, elevated the canons of the order of the Holy Sepulchre to the rank of knighthood, in compensation for the services they had rendered to the Church. This powerful order wore a white habit, over which was hung a plain gold cross with square points, and four smaller crosses were placed in the angles formed by the greater cross.

These knights exercised a bounteous hospitality towards all pilgrims and Christian brethren requiring aid. This order of knighthood was subsequently placed under the guardianship of the Franciscan Superior of the order, resident in Jerusalem. Aspirants to the rank of knight were expected to prove, at least, four quarters of nobility; but as in a distant country proofs were difficult or impossible to be procured, merchants, traders, and other persons of known repute, were permitted to give an oath affirming themselves to be "nobly born;" and the candidate, once accepted, was sworn to keep the statutes and maintain the customs of the order. He was to hear mass daily; he was to expose his life, on every occasion, in the support and defence of religion against the infidels, or else to furnish a soldier at his entire charge, to fill his place in the Holy War. He swore to avoid unjust quarrels; to take no part in duels, and to promote peace and amity amongst mankind; he was bound to protect widows, defend orphans, and become the champion of the oppressed.

The knights took oaths to observe the commandments of the Church; to abstain from profane swearing, drunkenness, and impurity; and to keep themselves free from every sin and crime.

After these vows had been taken, accompanied by every ceremony of religious solemnity, the Franciscan superior of the order (or *guardiano*) stood up to bless

the sword and gold spurs of the new knight. Then followed the imposition of hands ; with an appropriate exhortation to be faithful to the cause of religion and the defence of the Holy Sepulchre. The spurs were next attached to the heel, and the sword was presented to the champion, who was bid to "use it in the defence of the holy cause." The belt was bound on to the waist, and the sword was drawn from the scabbard, and, by the hand of the guardiano, three times struck lightly on the shoulder of the new knight, who knelt with head bowed reverently down, in the direction of the Holy Sepulchre ; finally, the sign of the cross was three times made over the new knight, and the sacramental words were pronounced, "Ego te constituo et ordino N. Militem sanctissimi Sepulchri Domini nostri Jesu Christi, in nomine Patris et Filii, et Spiritus Sancti."

A gold chain was afterwards placed round the neck of the knight, or a red ribbon, from which hung the cross of the order. This badge of knighthood was also worked on the left shoulder of the upper garment of the knight.

These solemn and mystic ceremonies, which were performed on the sacred soil of Palestine and in the holy precincts of Jerusalem, had a powerful influence, not only on the minds of the knights, but upon those of the bystanders ; and we find, accordingly, that the knights of the military and religious orders (for though we have described minutely the form of creating a knight of the Holy Sepulchre, all the others were nearly the same) assumed a power and authority which not only made them become of the highest importance in the Levant, but which extended to every kingdom in Europe. These military and monastic orders, secular from their wielding so well the carnal weapons of the flesh, and monastic, from their *celebate vows*, and residence in the houses of their own order, speedily became thronged with the most noble of the aristocracies of the West, and exercised great influence over the manners of their countrymen. Refinement of speech and courtesy of action, with gravity and

grace of bearing, were chiefly owing to them. The revival of letters is also greatly to be attributed to these noble and valiant men, as it was not possible for a knight of high lineage, and also half a churchman, to preserve the boorish and senseless contempt for reading and writing which so long marked the provincial nobleman of mediæval Europe.

If we reflect that the feudal system, succeeding a state of *utter barbarism*, had left the weak entirely at the mercy of brute force throughout the greatest portion of Europe, we can understand the institution of these orders as the reaction of awakening public feeling. We can also understand their attraction to generous and pious minds; burning to consecrate themselves to the cause of the Church, and to the good of their fellow creatures; and yet unwilling to imprison themselves for life in the dreary walls of convents. To the youthful, who had suffered disappointment, or who had to atone for some violent crime, the military orders offered the noblest refuge, and the most effectual mode of penance. The youth who, in the violence of revelry or passion, had stained his conscience with the blood of his fellow man, could now offer up his own life in defence of the oppressed pilgrim, or of the feeble in any land. The same enthusiasm which prompted millions to rush on the burning sands of Syria, nerved the arms of these new orders of knights to perform prodigies of valour—something of the dignity of the greatest of all causes, blended with the human bearing of magnanimity and valour. We do not need to draw on the imagination for portraits of these military knights; all history bears witness to their chivalrous presence no less than to their valour in the field; and have we not still surviving the portrait of a “Knight of St. John,” by Giorgione, to confirm the ideal which history inspires? The influence of these great orders did not cease when the institutions died out. We have seen that at the ceremony of initiation (which was preceded by vigils, fastings, and prayers), the new knight took an oath “to defend the weak, the oppressed,

and widows and orphans." To do so became, in fact, a religious duty, forming an essential part of the character of a true knight. The punctilious and exaggerated estimate of these "duties" in a knight and a gentleman served, especially amongst the Teutons (who had a reverential and most adventurous turn of mind), to form those high qualities which, under a different style of society, are still justly deemed to form the basis of the education of every *gentleman*. The code of honour was traced out on irrevocable laws, based on the noblest sentiments of the human heart. Delicacy, generosity, truth, and courtesy are no less insisted upon than valour, and the observance of those fundamental moral duties common to all mankind.

The distinction of knighthood was sometimes conferred on monarchs by private individuals; it was sometimes chosen in preference to royalty.

Not merely in the religious orders of chivalry (though these, from their close organisation and their services to the Church, must ever be looked upon as the aristocracy of the great body of knighthood) were the softening influences of piety evolved, but letters and self immolation, and every ennobling virtue, were often discovered.

The secular body soon shared in these lovely and Christian virtues; but the exquisite and unwritten "code of honour," which was the law of the true knight, must, as far as we can now ascertain, be sought for in the truthful and manlier races of Germany and of the North. This code was faulty, we are aware; no human society ever is, or can be, devoid of great errors; but it was immeasurably the best ideal that had ever yet been placed before the eyes of the powerful and dominant nobility of any land. The knight was restrained by honour from illegal gains extorted by violence; he was forbidden to treat his captive, even if a *personal foe*, with cruelty, much less with torture; he was bound to keep his promise, even to his hurt. Female honour was to be sacred in his eyes; the gentle arts of music and of song, especially the singing of devout and holy

lays, was warmly encouraged; a modest and humble demeanour was taught to arrogant and overbearing youth; above all things, the precepts of pure religion were instilled; and there can be no doubt that the strong prohibitions against "witches," "conjurers," and all the superstitions of magic, so enticing to human passions and curiosity, in a civilized age, really did at that period destroy many lingering traces of the horrid and loathsome superstitions and practices of heathendom, of which we have evidence that some survived to a much later period.

During the twelfth, thirteenth, and fourteenth centuries the magic that chiefly threw its spell over Europe was not that of the sorcerer, but that of chivalry. A wild spirit of romantic valour and enterprise was inculcated by the spirit and *literature* of the times. But there was not a practical knowledge of the world, and a keen appreciation of the more domestic charms of life. Thus we have not only the great romances of chivalry, full of fabled perils and superhuman heroism, but we have the beautiful "*Livre des Cent Ballades*" of old Hutin, of the date of the middle of the thirteenth century, to afford us an aspect of society but little known; and almost a century later, the Italian nobleman, Piere de' Rossi, of Parma, was celebrated, in his own day, as realising the very ideal of the valour, courtesy, purity, and benignity of the true Christian knight.

From time immemorial the tribes of the North had delighted to listen to the lays of professed bards or scalds; and of these songs or ballads we have abundant traditions and legends. Though impressive by a certain grandeur of outline, and by the prevalence of many truths (disguised under forms homely and trivial), their *barbarism* is such as to revolt our senses, in these more humane days. But with the Crusades arose a milder form of adventure; and a more legitimate channel was opened to valour. The love of beauteous and virtuous maidens was inculcated as "the duty" of the true Christian knighthood; and the wildest flights of fancy could

not surpass the adventures of everyday life, on the journeys to and from Palestine, and, during the stay there, of the Pilgrim and the Crusader.

The situation (geographically) of Provence, its delightful climate, harmonious dialect, and civilization of long standing, naturally pointed it out as the seat of the new literature; and accordingly we find that schools of *trouvères*, minstrels, or *troubadours*, were soon formed in that sweet and sunny land; and from thence these were dispersed over Spain, France, and Germany. The *trouvère* was ever welcome to the castle and to the banquet of the great; and his tales and lays, dwelling on the memories and charming the fancy of the hearers, served to confirm and spread in all classes that belief in the "chivalric virtues" which so powerfully aided in controlling the brutality and avarice of savage despotism. The military prowess of knighthood may be said to have been its smallest merit; its real benefit to humanity was in raising the standard of moral conduct, and in inculcating, in an age of lawlessness, the subjection of human passion to the precepts of religion, and to the voice of honour. The "*conquiers honneur*," by "*droite vaillance*," was the keynote of the education of a youth of noble birth, and none better has yet been discovered.

Although Italy, from its superior civilization, and from the mixture of commercial aptitude and shrewd practical sense of the nation, felt the influence of chivalric institutions less than the northern nations; yet its graceful and noble forms of investiture, and its religious and lofty code of morals, did not pass without arousing, more particularly in the Ghibelline feudatories, and in Southern Italy (where the Normans had held sway), something of the fervour which warmed and softened the Northern nations. England, then under Norman rule, shared largely in the passion for romantic literature. So abundant did the latter become that historians have divided it into periods, or "cycles." The first of these is the era of Charlemagne, in which the enigmatic hero, Orlando or Roland (whose name we find all over Europe,

in Spain, on the Rhine, by Gaeta, and even far amongst the hills of Pistoia), figures conspicuously. The second, of a less exclusively French character, dwells upon "King Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table." In this cycle English influence can be discovered. Romantic and fiery Spain could not be without her own literature, coloured by the enthusiasm of her people, by her delicious climate, and by the refined and pathetic minstrelsy of the Moors. The romance of the "Cid" is best known to our readers; but this national treasure (accidentally rescued from oblivion at a very recent period), affords but a specimen of the lays, legends, romances, and ballads of the Peninsula.

Germany breathed, on the same theme, her own dreamy and mystical lays. The great poem of the "Neibelungen" is the earliest almost historical poem we know. But the Minnesängers soon formed, like the *trouvères* of Provence, a privileged body in the Vaterland. The leading trait of German poetry was the reverential, almost mystic worship it expressed for female purity, and the large acquiescence it gave to the mental equality of woman with man. No German disdains to ask counsel from the lady of his *devoirs* any more than to celebrate her beauty, her modesty, and her domestic accomplishments.

So universal was the fashion and taste for chivalric literature, that, after the conquest of Syria by the Crusaders, we even find romances composed after the models of the North in the Greek language, and admired at Constantinople.

The body of men who remained proof against the charms of the chivalric school and the tide of fashion, were the Italian municipalities. These remarkable bodies never strike us as *barbarous*; in so many points do we find that they were quite as advanced in civilization as ourselves. Commerce would indeed have been impossible between the Levant and Italy, if the latter had not been the equal, intellectually, of the Byzantian. With the reflective and judicious mind necessary for these

great mercantile enterprises arose naturally the disposition to smile at the fantasies of chivalry, and at its indifference to the aims of a well-ordered citizen's life. To a mind constituted as that of the "perfect citizen" was, the extravagances of chivalry could but arouse emotions of regret, surprise, and disapprobation; and the natural bent of the Italian mind to the sobered and polished beauties of the antique soon found expression in another form of literature, appealing less to the wild fresh feelings of youth than to the matured reason and chastened judgment of manhood.

The Crusades gave, as may be imagined (from the geographical position of the country), a boundless impulse to the naval and mercantile genius of Italy. The transport of so many hundreds of thousands of men, with horses, followers, and beasts of burden, arms, and provisions, taxed to the utmost the resources of the dockyards of those days. We do not read without astonishment of the progress which shipbuilding had already made, even in the most remote north. The chronicle of Oderic Vitalis mentions a great ship built for the first Crusaders at Inverness, in the county of Moray, in Scotland. If the wild Norwegians who, thus possessing the great art of building those enormous galleys of the power of transporting two thousand men, could hew and cleave whilst chanting their plaintive and wild, witch-like ballads,¹ the fleets sent forth by the Italians cannot so much surprise us. Yet we read with wonder that in the year 1099 the Venetians contributed two hundred galleys for the transport of the Crusaders, and the Pisans sent forth their archbishop, Dacimbert, afterwards Patriarch of Jerusalem, with an escort of one hundred and twenty men. The influence of the Crusades upon Italy was indeed immense; but it was not of the same kind as that they produced on the rest of Europe. Instead of impoverishing, they enriched her; instead of bestowing a novel and uncritical literature on her, they enabled her to recover

¹ One of these is of inconceivable beauty. It is the lament of a water fairy to whom baptism has been denied.

the precious manuscripts, the real "Sibylline Books," in which are found the imperishable laws that have always governed civilized man. Northern chivalry was the graceful and welcome Aurora Borealis, cheering and charming the Polar night of ignorance; but from Italy arose that Sun of Righteousness, with healing on his wings, which all mankind agree to call Christian civilization.

CHAPTER IX.

The Norman Conquests in the Two Sicilies, and the Suzerainty of the Pope—Civilization of the Southern Provinces of Italy and of their capital, Palermo.

THE Kingdom of Naples and Sicily—or of the Two Sicilies, as the southern provinces of Italy were long designated—has never yet been duly brought forward to the observation it deserves in the pages of general history. The deplorable depression into which these beautiful provinces have fallen has been frequently pointed out with more or less scorn and pity; but no corresponding research or care has been employed in recalling their ancient civilization, commerce, industry, and intellectual progress.

Even their architectural and artistic treasures have remained in relative oblivion, whilst the more fortunate parts of the Peninsula, the central and the northern, have engrossed the interest and laborious investigations of scholars and historians of every country and of every age.

And yet the civilization of those favoured provinces was brilliant just before the pall of darkness was to overshadow them; and churches, monuments, paintings, and sculptures, heretofore unknown or neglected, attest the uninterrupted activity of those various centres of independent citizen life.

In the following pages the Norman conquests of Southern Italy will be rapidly reviewed, together with their alliances with the Pontiffs; the consequences of the feudal yoke will be explained, and the social influences which had gathered in the maritime provinces of the Sicilies, and which had produced a brilliant but transitory gleam of civilization, not unimportant to mankind, will be pointed out.

First, we shall turn to Sicily. This island, situated almost in the centre of the Mediterranean, of a nearly regular triangular form, of which one side is turned to Greece, another to Africa, and a third to Italy, has been subjected, in almost an equal ratio, to the effects of conquest of all three powers and influences, each of which has left traces, as yet indelible, of the stamp of their different peoples. The Norman and the Spanish conquerors, who ruled the island for centuries, have comparatively passed away. They never really mingled with the natives; but the classical features and forms of Greece still move and breathe in sunlit Syracuse; and in Palermo again, the "city of cities," the Greek, the Hebrew, the Saracen, and the Berber types are distinctly remarked. The latter harmonise with the savage barbarism in which the lower classes are still plunged. In those sunny cities the eye glows with the fire of passion, but is often wanting in that of calmer reason: it is softened by "credulity" to falsehood, with suspicion and dislike to higher truths.

The destructive hand of time and the fury of successive conquerors, together with the difficulty of deciphering characters written in the Cufic form and Arabian language, caused, until late years, great obscurity to rest on the annals of Sicily; especially to that period which had reference to the long subjection of the island to the Mussulmans. It is owing to the learned Oriental scholar (the Senator) Michele Amari, that we are now enabled to trace the condition of his native country under the Byzantine rule, and the conquest of the Arabians.

All accounts agree as to the existence of a flourishing commercial state, and of magnificent Byzantine basilicas, beautiful churches, and stately remains of antique temples and edifices, appropriated to their own uses by the Mussulmans.

The Lombard principalities of Benevento, Salerno, and Capua were then flourishing and wealthy provinces. Amalfi, Gaeta, and Naples were commonwealths in the highest state of prosperity under direct Greek influence.

To Amalfi is commonly attributed the honour of having invented the mariner's compass. Its merchants erected, in the Holy Land, the church in which the Order of St. John of Jerusalem was founded, and a copy of the "Pandects of Justinian" was discovered amongst the treasures of the city, and now forms one of those of Florence. The commerce of these provinces with the Levant had naturally brought the influence of early Christian traditions of art to bear on Western Italy; and after the Norman conquest, edifices of a beautifully blended style peculiar to Sicily were erected—half Saracenic, half Christian—and stood side by side with Moorish monuments, and palaces half fortress and half residence, in the city of Palermo.

The Two Sicilies' most brilliant moment was that of the brief reign of Frederick II. over them, and of his residence in their boundaries. But it was the conquest of the Normans that fixed the broad line of demarcation between Central and Southern Italy, which survives to this day.

The first appearance of this remarkable people (the Normans) was as pilots and plunderers all along the coasts of the German Sea. We find them the terror of Belgium and of Gaul so early as the third century; and, little more than five hundred years later, they obtained a lasting footing in France, by the investment of the noble province now called Normandy, the conversion to Christianity of Rollo, their leader, and his marriage with the daughter of Charles the Simple.

The extraordinary powers of administration immediately developed by the Normans (generally classed with the mere savage and heathen barbarians) strike us even now with surprise. Where, we ask, had they acquired that mixture of craft and reckless bravery, that military capacity for conquest, and that civil ability to retain what they conquered, so little to be looked for in pirates from the wilds of Scandinavia?

Their social life, too, was different from that of the gross and gluttonous Saxons, the recital of whose feasts fills us, even now, with disgust and amazement. Compared to other nations, the Normans were temperate and refined

in their pleasures, and in the indulgences of the table. They placed an exceeding and significant value on fine and abundant white linen; in their earliest records we first find the virtue of cleanliness discovered. Their intellectual capacity was great: it was administrative above all. Normandy immediately rose into a province so flourishing under Rollo, as to excite the jealousy and fear of the French courtiers. Happily the genius of the conquerors was essentially maritime, and from their Norman harbours they went forth, like a swarm of bees from a too narrow hive, to a brighter land and to less troubled waters. The first mention we find of the Normans in Italy relates that a band of forty pilgrims, returning from the Holy Land, disembarked at Salerno, and were hospitably received by Gaimaro, the Lombard chief who reigned in that province.

Soon after their arrival a piratical swarm of Saracens landed near Salerno, pitched their tents, and insolently demanded the accustomed tribute from Gaimaro. These Saracens were the terror, even then, of the seaboard of the Mediterranean, and as Southern Italy was divided amongst so many small potentates, none of which was separately able to cope with the Saracens, it followed naturally that a custom had grown up for the rich towns to buy off the invaders by paying ransom as tribute; and this was so perfectly expected that the Saracens, in the present instance, did not even set a guard over their encampment, but, as if in defiance or contempt of the Salernitans, began to indulge in every act of riot, violence, and licence under their very eyes. The Norman pilgrims in speechless indignation beheld this scene of poltroonery and violence, and prevailing on some of the bolder of the Longobards and men of Salerno to follow them, they fell on the disorderly Saracens by night with so much fury and success that the latter (exaggerating their number in the darkness) precipitately sought refuge on their galleys. A few succeeded in reaching these, but most of them were drowned.

The surprise and delight of the Salernitans knew no

bounds; they fancied their champions to be gifted with miraculous powers.¹

Gaimaro loaded the victors with thanks, and would have added treasure too, but the pilgrims declined these, saying they had not been prompted by motives of interest, but by the "love of God," and because they could not tolerate the insults of the Saracens. Gaimaro then expressed his desire that other Normans should come to Salerno to enter his service as guards. After some stay at his Court the pilgrims prepared to return home, and departed, rich in gifts of rare stuffs, precious jewels, and in the still more rare produce of a fertile southern climate, the golden fruits and wondrous flowers of which (unknown on the arid shores of Palestine) they carried accounts to Scandinavia, which awoke the greed as well as the delight of their auditors.

A regular migration of Normans followed this first expedition. They were received with open favour at Salerno, and taken into the pay of Gaimaro.² They are described as a tall and comely race, with curly brown or fair beards and hair, and blue or hazel eyes. They were reckless in the fight, and faithful, proud, and courteous.

Southern Italy was at that time divided into many provinces, each under a separate ruler. Capua was a Longobard principality, placed between the vast territories of the Abbey of Monte Cassino, and of the Duchy of Naples. Gaeta and Amalfi, also duchies nominally, were almost independent republics under the shadowy supremacy of the Emperor of the East.

The principalities of Benevento and Salerno, under the Longobard sway, occupied that portion of the Neapolitan territory to which the appellation of "Principato di Citra," and "Ultra," was given at this time. The rest of the territory was under the dominion of the Greeks, who kept a powerful garrison at Bari, their capital. This province was governed despotically by Melo,

¹ Amatiss. *Ystoire de li Normant*, L. i. et 17, p. 15. Leo Ostieus *Lib. ii.*, c. 47, p. 362. Anonim. *Cassin. ap. Muratori V.*, p. 55. *Storia della Lotta dei Papi e degli Imperatori*. Cherrier, p. 53., Vol. i.

² *Ystoire de li Normant*, L. i., c. 17 e 18.

the catapan or lieutenant of the Emperor of the East. Melo was a Longobard, and consequently opposed by violent national animosities to the Greek population; and in the year 1011 arose the first sanguinary tumult, which was the beginning of a subsequent rebellion, and final severance of Italy from Byzantium.

During this tumult, Melo's family was given up to the Greeks, but he himself was able to escape to Constantinople; and in the following year this turbulent and vindictive ruler was enabled to return to Bari with a stronger force, which, for the moment, re-established the Imperial sway. But Melo had other objects in view. He went from Court to Court of Southern Italy with loud complaints of his maltreatment, and of the oppression of his countrymen. For some time he could not obtain even a hearing; but at last he appealed to a band of Normans who were maturing a pilgrimage to the shrine of their patron saint, "St. Michael," the Archangel, on the Mountain of Gargano. To them he represented the wealth and the defenceless state of the province of Bari. The Normans listened with joy, and, aided by the bands of their countrymen in the service of the Longobard princes, they fought a pitched battle against the Greeks in the plains of Cannæ, on the spot where Hannibal won his victory. The defection of their Italian allies left the Normans, however, a prey to their foes, and out of three thousand who stood upon the field, hardly five hundred remained alive.¹

This catastrophe, which was glorious for the vanquished, confirmed the reputation of their valour and trustworthiness; and accordingly we find, during the eleven successive years, that bands of Normans were regularly enlisted as "Guards" by the Abbots of Monte Cassino and the Longobard princes; and Sergius, Duke of Naples, finally gave them an avowed footing in Italy, by granting a fief to Rainulf, a Norman, on the confines of the Greco-Neapolitan territory, and on that of Capua.

¹ Et li Normant liquel avoient esté trois mille, non remainstrent si non cinc-cent. Ystoire, Lib. i. e ii., 38 e 40.

These lands had long been the cause of bitter disputes between the two governments ; and on their being at last adjudicated to Sergius, he had prudently made them over to Rainulf, as to a sure and vigilant guardian.

On this fief the powerful hold of Aversa was soon erected; the massive walls of which, and the gallantry of the queen who held them, speedily made it become the fortress and general refuge and meeting ground of all the Normans in Southern Italy. To these naturally gathered the adventurers from Neustria, allured by the prospect of wealthy spoils and of a delightful climate.¹

Rainulf, raised to the rank of a count by his countrymen, tendered homage for his county to the Prince of Salerno ; and from him (according to the Italian fashion) he received, in his right hand, the standard of his future county.

At this very time there lived at Coutances, in Normandy, a noble but impoverished knight named Tancred, a follower of Robert, Duke of Normandy. Tancred had been twice married, and like another patriarch had twelve sons—five the children of the first, and seven of the second wife. Tancred, unable to maintain so large a family, heard with joy that the three elder—William of the Iron Arm, Drogone, and Unfred—had resolved to join a band of pilgrims, as destitute as themselves, and to seek their fortunes in Southern Italy. They accordingly reached Salerno, and were engaged by Gaimaro the Second, in his troop. But it may readily be imagined that the overbearing turbulence of these recruits made the Prince thankful to be honourably rid of them ; and an opportunity soon occurred to favour this desire, for Giorgio Maniaco, the lieutenant or catapan of the Greek Emperor, communicated to Gaimaro his intention of recapturing Sicily (which had been for fully two centuries under the Saracen yoke), and requested him to afford him the aid of his Norman troops (whose fame for valour stood so high) in forwarding his design. Gaimaro easily persuaded the Normans to transfer their allegiance. The hope of

¹ Ystoire, ec. Lib. i. c. ii., 38 e 40.

plunder and the pleasure of an active and conquering life alike agreed in making the proposition welcome ; and thus the sons of Tancred de Hauteville, and their followers took payment under the Greek Emperor.

On joining the troops of the catapan in April, these keen observers noted with surprise the negligence of the Greek host, and the general improvidence and carelessness evinced in the administration of a province but lately rescued from open rebellion ; and these observations were not lost to them, as we shall presently see.

Meanwhile, their auxiliary aid was of the greatest service to the Greeks in Sicily. Ever foremost in the fight, and as persevering as they were brave, they contributed greatly to the success of the expedition.

The Greek authorities treated them at first with the utmost deference and favour ; but, as was to be expected, dissensions arose when the partition of the spoils was begun. The Normans were overbearing and rapacious ; the Greeks jealous and faithless.

Messina and Syracuse had meantime been reconquered from the Saracens. William of the Iron Hand had slain an emir in single fight at the siege of the latter city, and the greater part of the island owned the Imperial dominion, when the catapan refused to the Norman allies *the half* of the spoils of war—which was the share they demanded. A tumultuous scene followed, but a barbarous and impolitic act of cruelty of the catapan brought on a bloody crisis.

He ordered the Norman interpreter, Ardoin, a Lombard by birth, to be stripped and shaved (an intolerable indignity to the national feelings of a Lombard), and then to be scourged round the camp.

The vengeance of the Normans was eminently characteristic ; it was prompt, intrepid, politic, complete. In a few fishing boats they crossed the Faro of Messina, and landed on the coast of Italy.¹ It was the depth of winter ; and even in that southern climate winter, whilst it lasts, is intensely severe in the snow-covered mountain

¹ Chronique de Robert Viscart, Lib. i. and v. Cherier, Tom. i., p. 56.

ranges; but, aided by their interpreter, Ardoin, they forced their way through frightful obstacles to Aversa.

Arrived in that great stronghold, they told the tale of their injuries to the willing ears of their countrymen, and proposed the conquest of wealthy, weak, defenceless Apulia. All the Normans in the service of the Abbots of Monte Cassino, of the Longobard princes, and of Rainulf himself, joined them, besides a multitude of adventurers. Rainulf, Count of Aversa, gave three hundred equipped men-at-arms; from whence we may form some estimate of his great and rapid rise to power.

When the force was gathered twelve counts or captains were chosen; but the supreme command was, with consummate policy, continued to Ardoin, the Longobard. This astute and vindictive chief had secret correspondences with all the greater cities of Apulia, and was animated with the hope of an easy conquest; but yet, on attempting a night attack on the powerful central town of Melfi, he found the population in arms, waiting to defend their city. Ardoin's harangue to the citizens of Melfi on this occasion may be given as a specimen of the oratory which won over the fickle southern people to his side.¹ "We bring you," he said, "the liberty you seek for. These who are with me are *no enemies*, but are especial friends. I have been faithful to my word with yourselves; keep now your promises to me. These men have come to *liberate you* from the yoke to which you have been subjected. Hearken to my words; join yourselves to them. Providence is on your side. God has at length had mercy on your long sufferings and shame; hence he sends you these valorous men to rescue you from thrall."

Incredible as it may seem, Melfi opened her gates on the above shallow oratory, and Venosa, Ascoli, and Lavallo followed her example. In two campaigns the greater part of Apulia was conquered. The childish folly of the natives can hardly inspire us with pity; they literally delivered themselves up to a handful of bold soldiers. The Greek rule had been the mildest possible; though a

¹ Ystoire de li Normant, Lib. ii., c. 18., p. 44.

catapan occasionally abused his irresponsible power, and had committed some acts of vexatious despotism. The feudal system was immediately instituted in the rich and captive province. The twelve counts had a large town and territory allotted to each, and the inferior officers were provided for, according to their rank. Rainulf reserved for himself the commanding and valuable districts of Monte Gargano and Siponto, holding thus the power of giving plenty, or scarcity to the province. William of the Iron Hand was created commander-in-chief and Count of the Norman nation (*Comes Normanorum*) in Apulia, by an unanimous vote of a public assembly of his countrymen in the year 1043. This dignity conferred those of absolute command in war, and of president of all councils and assemblies in time of peace.

The Normans did not, however, seek to exempt themselves from any of the forms of the feudal system; they immediately sought a legal right and a sanction to their acts by investiture from a suzerain superior in rank. Gaimaro, Prince of Salerno, received the homage of all the twelve new counts, and invested each with the symbol of fealty—the standard of his new county placed in his right hand.¹ But, in spite of this alliance, the position of the Normans was still very precarious in Apulia, not only from their small number, but from the dangers of attacks from the Greeks, and from the revolt of the population, now awakened to a sense of their own fatal weakness and folly; and Rainulf as well as Drogone—who had succeeded to his brother, William of the Iron Hand—eagerly besought the reconfirmation of their investitures at the hands of Henry II., Emperor of Germany, to whom they despatched a great sum of tribute, and to whom they proffered liege homage. Thus Count Drogone acquired the title of the Emperor's man, and, as the chronicle runs, "Drogone and Rainulf were glorified by the Emperor, and put into possession of their counties."² The Normans

¹ Et que non vaut la possession sans prince second la loy que fit Guazmere il en vestit chacun. *Ystoire*, Lib. ii., c. 30.

² *Ystoire*, Lib. iii., cap. 122.

did not accept this honour in any hereditary sense, however, but reserved to themselves the right, as we shall see, of "free election" still of a successor to Drogo.

The southern populations of Italy have commonly been at war with all and every ruler and form of government which for the time being they may chance to be under, but the exacting yoke of the Normans, and their small number, would have moved the vengeance and inspired the indignation of the most docile of subject people. Drogo was assassinated in church in the year 1051, and several of the other twelve counts fell in like manner by the dagger. But the total want of any chief to head the insurgents, and of any union in their movements, prevented these isolated assassinations from producing any beneficial consequences to the natives; and fresh swarms of Norman adventurers, crowding to join their countrymen, and to share their fortunes, soon reinforced the strength of the conquerors.

Robert Guiscard, the eldest son of the second wife of Tancred de Hauteville, now enters on the scene already so glorious to his half-brothers. He landed at Salerno, as usual, accompanied by a small band of utterly destitute and unarmed followers. We next hear of him at Melfi, fully accoutred, and desperately bent on aiding his countrymen in making fresh conquests. He invaded Calabria, and pushed on to attack the Prince of Benevento, 1057.

But a common feeling of terror now united, for the first time, the Italian populations, justly alarmed at the hold these seemingly invincible strangers had acquired in their territories. Representations of the rapine and sacrileges of the Normans were consequently carried to Pope Leo IX., an austere and aged Pontiff, of high lineage and of blameless life.

In spite of his years, the Pope did not hesitate to seek his relative the Emperor Henry III. in person. He went to Germany to plead the cause of oppressed Apulia, plundered Calabria, and mourning Italy; and the licence, tyranny, and harshness of the Norman yoke amply

justified the indignation of the virtuous and devoted Pontiff, and reasonably explained his alarm lest they should effect a permanent footing in the Peninsula. "Not only," said Leo IX., "do the cruel Normans massacre with a pitiless hand all who resist them, sparing neither women nor children, but they plunder and burn sanctuaries and churches with sacrilegious contempt of spiritual threats and excommunications."¹

Seven hundred of the finest horsemen from Lorraine and Swabia were sent to Italy with the Pope, and a very large Italian force was gathered under his banner. This army, animated by the most glowing hopes, marched into Apulia, and found themselves confronted at Civitella (a poorly fortified borough of the Capitanata), by the Normans, who scarcely mustered three thousand men-at-arms, and a small body of foot.

The Normans thinking the odds too great against them, attempted negotiation, and sent a herald to offer "homage and tribute to the Church," if they were left undisturbed in their new acquisitions.

But the Chancellor of the Holy See replied they had only one course left to them, to lay down their arms and quit the country, or else "to perish every one of them by the sword."

The Normans responded by sounding the battle charge, and fighting like desperate men who risked their all in all. The Italian troops, on the other hand, took to flight, and the seven hundred German lances, though fighting steadily and bravely, were unable to withstand three thousand desperate men, the most valiant soldiers in Europe.

The Pontiff, thus abandoned, sought refuge in the walls of Civitella, from whence the trembling and cowardly inhabitants expelled him, regardless of his age, misfortunes, and sacred character.² The fugitive Pontiff, thus shamelessly forsaken by his own party, and thrust from Civitella, was met by a wandering party of Normans,

¹ Wibertus, *Vita Leo. IX.*, L. ii., c. 10, ap. Muratori, T. iii., p. 297.

² Chron. of Robert Viscart, p. 275.

and conducted to their camp. There the tidings of the approach of their august guest had spread, and the entire Norman host, with that astonishing policy and statesmanlike self-control to which their power was owing (at least as much as to their valour), received the Pontiff prostrate in the dust, veiling their faces, protesting their fealty to the Apostle St. Peter, and imploring "pardon and benediction."

This scene, in the full flush of a victory so unexpected, that it might well have upset the strongest minds; and the profound and instinctive craft which must have prompted it, convey the most convincing proof to the mind of the reader, that the sway of the Normans was owing quite as much to their ready self-control, in moments of excitement, as to their axes and armour.

Leo IX. was in no position to deny requests urged under such circumstances, and with every outward semblance of such profound veneration for his person. The pardon was accorded, and the "benediction" was pronounced on kneeling hosts, with heads bestrewn with ashes and dust.

But the enlightened and noble mind of the Pontiff could not be deceived by appearances of a penitence so sudden on the very spot where his best hopes had been extinguished; and though he lived for several months afterwards, he never recovered from the blow. He was conducted, with every appearance of the deepest reverence, to Benevento, where he lived for nine months longer in an honourable kind of semi-captivity, and at his approaching end he reluctantly gave up his treacherous and cowardly allies, and consented to receive the homage of the Normans for their conquests of Apulia and of Calabria. He authorised them also, in the name and under the suzerainty of the Church, "to invade the territory of the Greeks."¹

This unique but politic concession was the work of Hildebrand, who had in view, along with jealousy of the Greek Church, the cementing of the Italian provinces

¹ Malaterra, Lib. i., c. 14, ap. Muratori, Tom. v., p. 553.

together, under the strong and able rule of the Normans. After he had signed this treaty, Leo IX. was liberated and escorted to Rome, where he soon after expired.

Robert Guiscard, by far the most brilliant, chivalrous, and interesting of the sons of Tancred de Hauteville, had meantime covered himself with glory at the Battle of Civitella, so much so as to cause his half-brother, Unfred, Count of Apulia, to feel both jealousy and alarm. The latter consequently contrived to despatch him at the head of a band of the most turbulent spirits into the wilds of Calabria, under pretext of guarding the passes of Val di Crati and of San Marco. The Normans in those wilds were obliged to live by mere rapine, as they were cut off from all supplies, and had no money to purchase any.¹

The neighbouring Greek authorities seem to have been powerless to repress the raids Robert would make from the heights of San Marco on the rich, effeminate towns of the plains, and this hard but inglorious life had lasted some time when the death of Unfred, in 1057, left the Countship of Apulia vacant. Robert was proclaimed in the place of his half-brother, in spite of some dissentient voices, and he thus became virtually supreme head of his nation in Italy.

Previous to the election of Robert Guiscard, Italy had been divided into two parties. The one favoured the establishment of the feudal system, with all its consequences : the other was in favour of the institution of oligarchical republics, over whom a titular sovereign should preside, and of a league between the Italian peoples with the Greeks and Lombards. This was the favourite scheme of the south of Italy, then by far the most reflective and refined portion. The Prince of Salerno, in particular, sided with these opinions, as, though he had often aided the Normans, he was alive to the danger of their growing power.

The other suzerains of Italy shared in his alarm. Rumours became audible of armies preparing by the

¹ Il prit voie de larron chevalier, son petit pourcesté est de la cose de vivre li faillèrent les deniers à la bourse et lo boire destin Robert estoit l'aigüe de la pure fontaine. Ystoire, p. 74.

Emperors of Greece and of Germany; and the Pope Nicholas II. was persuaded even to excommunicate the Normans.

But the genius of the great Hildebrand (at that time Vice-Chancellor of the Church, and second only in dignity to the Pontiff,) discerned the advantage of a totally opposite plan of action. He designed a long war against Germany. Again, the Greek Emperor was a rival and a "schismatic," as Rome chose to designate the Greek *Orthodox Church*. By making a friend of the bold and wary Normans, he assured his hold safely in Southern Italy, and the supremacy of the *Latin dogma*, which he had so much at heart.

Robert Guiscard, on his side, felt that under the double weight of *excommunication*, and of the "popular hatred," his chances were too unequal; his troops being insignificant in number, compared to the natives. He was consequently prepared to meet Hildebrand more than half way. The treaty of Melfi, which, after great debating, was agreed upon between these two remarkable men, worthy to understand each other, has been the groundwork of the political code of the Two Sicilies for centuries afterwards; and by it were regulated the relations in which the nobility and inferior gentry of the kingdoms stood to the *Roman Church*.

The preliminary process was of course the "absolution" of Robert and his mates from excommunication and all ecclesiastical censures by Pope Nicholas II.

The treaty then granted to Robert Guiscard the title of "Duke of Apulia and Calabria," together with the *Pontifical investiture* for all the lands in the southern provinces at that time possessed by the Normans; and authorised him to seize and possess all such countries in Southern Italy and Sicily, as were still held by the Greeks and Saracens.

Richard the Norman, Count of Aversa, was, by direct investiture, raised to the Principality of Capua, regardless of the rights of the Longobard prince (a faithful ally and friend of the Church), whom the Normans had driven from his domains.

In return for these unjust investitures and concessions, Robert and Richard declared themselves "*vassals*" of the "*Holy Roman Church*," *they and their heirs after them*—a crafty clause to abolish the public right of election the Normans had always exercised, by making the "Papal interests" bound up with the "hereditary rights" of those families.¹

The Counts of Apulia and of Capua, and their heirs, were bound to furnish troops to the Holy See, in its defence against all enemies, and covenanted a tribute annually of twelve denari, of the coin of Pavia, to be paid for every square "*aratro*" of land possessed by them.

The influence of the Treaty of Melfi was very great; not only on the fate of Southern Italy, but also on Germany and on the East. It was the first decided step of Hildebrand's policy in the great dream of his life—the *universal dominion of the Church of Rome*. The Suzerainty, hitherto admitted, of the German Emperors over Southern Italy (in some parts at least) was effaced; and the populations of the country, finding the Normans were the allies and protectors of the Church, saw the hopelessness of any revolt from their harsh, exacting rule; as the spiritual arms of the clergy, no less than the temporal ones of the new lords of the soil, would have been exercised against them; and their only resource would have been a return under the dominion of the Greek Emperor; whose comparatively mild rule they now regretted deeply, when too late.

The feudal yoke was thus fixed for many centuries upon Southern Italy. If any stipulations were made in favour of the oppressed and timid populations, they were not observed. Moderation towards their inferiors (whom they despised) was not one of the virtues of this dominant and aggressive race. The meanest Norman warrior who put lance in rest, and feared neither death nor an equal, considered the conquered population as only created to serve him, and though the Normans were numerically

¹ Sub conditione, obligo me et meos heredes sive successores. L'Annal Eccl. ann. 1059, T. xi. p. 272.

few, yet as they spoke and acted like one man, and in union with the Church, the natives, overwhelming in mere point of population, but divided by jealousies (and whose only ideas of rebellion consisted in isolated assassinations), had not a chance against them. Northern and Central Italy, again, irritated at the exactions of some of the Imperial officers, willingly lent an ear to the overtures of Cardinal Hildebrand, preferring their alliance with their own Pontiff, an Italian, to the suzerainty of a stranger.

The Treaty of Melfi opened to Robert Guiscard intoxicating prospects of conquest and plunder, and perhaps it was to his zeal as a leader that these dreams were not too promptly realised; for the Greeks, though they could not meet the heavily-armed Normans in the field, held out valiantly in their fortresses and cities. The siege of Bari alone cost the invaders four consecutive years of patient and persevering assault. Finally, however, they triumphed; and thus the entire provinces of Apulia and Calabria, and the whole of Sicily, ended by being subject to the Normans.

The policy of the latter was soon shown in the liberty of conscience they tolerated. Greeks, Jews, and Mussulmans were permitted to worship according to their faith; and the latter were paid as "allies" by the Normans, and taken into regular service as troops; the soldierly conquerors being the first to appreciate the military capacities of the Saracens, subordinate to themselves. In the year 1075 they took Salerno (the first landing-place of their nation), and in 1077 they seized Benevento; thus erasing the last trace of the dominion of the Longobards, which had lasted from the invasion of Alboin, five hundred and seven years.

In the year 1068 another great triumph had been won by the Normans. William, the illegitimate son of Robert the Magnificent, Duke of Normandy, had invaded and conquered England; thus, in two very different regions, men of comparatively humble birth, but endowed with all the characteristics of a dominant race, had

“conquered kingdoms,” as in the romances of chivalry; but with the advantage of “reality,” and of enormous wealth and power, won for themselves and their followers.

The Norman leaders had not been unmindful of the advantages of matrimonial alliances. Robert Guiscard had espoused the sister of the Prince of Salerno; and his younger brother, who held Sicily as a fief¹ under him, had married the daughter of the Count of Flanders.

The marriage of Robert Guiscard, about the year 1076, afforded him a pretext for entering on a wider field of action; for his daughter had been wedded to the son of the Greek Emperor, Michael Ducas, and in one of the convulsions common in Constantinople, an usurper had driven the latter from the throne. Robert Guiscard, ever on the alert, instantly landed an army on the coast of Epirus, seized on Corfu, invaded Bulgaria, and filled the Eastern Empire with the terror of his name. At this juncture the summons reached him of the danger of Gregory VII. from the troops of Henry IV., and he was called (as we may remember) to the aid of his Suzerain and liege lord the Pontiff. Without a moment's hesitation he gave the command of his army to his son Bohemund; crossed the sea to Apulia, with a small retinue, and engaged the Saracen garrisons to rescue the Pope. Gregory VII. was liberated (though Rome was sacked, burnt, and partially ruined), and Robert returned to the East, meditating further conquests. But death closed his career in the island of Cephalonía in the year 1076, whilst he was preparing for the siege of Constantinople.

Twenty-five years of uninterrupted conquests had marked the life of this great man; from his obscure and indigent youth, at Coutances, in Lower Normandy, to his death, when ruler over Southern Italy, Sicily, and a portion of the Greek Islands. The highest characteristics of the Normans were embodied in him. He was as wary as he was bold, as munificent as he was rapacious; he understood thoroughly the policy of abiding by a covenant; and,

¹ Robert Guiscard's titles were, “Dux Italiæ, Calabriæ, and Siciliæ.” *Diplom. Monast. arc.* 1. 9, n. 23.

above all, he had that dexterity (so generally wanting in Northern races) of assuming, at the right moment, exactly the deportment most becoming to the occasion. To deny to such a man high intellectual capacity is impossible. The self-control which was shown by the Normans at Civitella forms a strange contrast to the childish fickleness of the native populations.

It must steadily be borne in mind, however, that the numerical inferiority of the Normans was always so great, compared to the masses of their native subjects, that the faculties of the former were ever kept on the full stretch, to maintain their hold on the soil; and that they were thus compelled to rule with a relatively light hand at first, and not to interfere with the separate national customs and forms of belief of their Greek, Saracenic, and Jewish vassals; thus giving a seeming leniency to their government, which otherwise would have been intolerable.

Robert Guiscard had named his second son, Roger, as the heir of his dominions. His will was respected; and Roger, in his turn, increased their extent. The nephew and last direct descendant of Robert Guiscard was William; and, by his express commands, all the territories passed to his cousin, Roger II., the great Count of Sicily, under whose reign the island became definitively united to the Duchy of Apulia, and the two were considered as parts of the same state. But this was not effected without difficulty. For Roger II., who was under the sentence of excommunication at the time William Duke of Apulia, died, assumed, *of his own authority*, (and in defiance both of his duty as a vassal of the Pontiff and of his being under "anathema,") the title of "Duke of Apulia and Calabria," without any concurrence of the Pope.

The latter, Honorius II., was justly incensed at this rebellion, and a "Crusade" was ordered against the excommunicated rebel. Honorius leagued himself with all the discontented nobles who had survived the Norman Conquest; and he was warmly seconded by the good wishes

of all the populations, who heartily longed for the extirpation of the strangers. The theological weapons of *plenary indulgences* were used to excite the zeal of Roger's foes; and the remission of *half of their sins* was promised to the survivors. In spite, however, of the justice of the Papal cause, and the zeal of his troops, and the hoped-for efficacy of the theological arms above mentioned, the Normans dispersed the untrained and unwarlike natives as easily as Robert Guiscard had done at Civitella. And the Pontiff himself, like Leo IX., had the anguish of beholding his army disband and fly before the orderly and valiant chivalry of Roger. Reduced to extremity, Honorius was compelled to purchase peace by revoking all ecclesiastical censures, and reconfirming Roger II. in all the territories and privileges granted by the treaty of Melfi. The discord and division which ensued at Rome on the death of Honorius II. afforded Roger an opportunity of making his power still more secure. He espoused the cause of Anacletus (the Pope first elected), whilst the Emperor of Germany, Lothair, and the celebrated St. Bernard took that of the Pontiff subsequently called Innocent II.

Roger now openly declared his intention of making himself King of Sicily. The islanders, indeed, were pleased with the prospect of his assuming this higher dignity; but the natural jealousies of the great feudatories, supported by the revengeful feelings of the dispossessed princes—Robert (formerly Prince of Capua), Rainulf, Count of Airolo, and Sergius, Duke of Naples—burst out into open revolt. At Scafati, indeed, their troops had a signal advantage; but Roger recovered his ground and obtained mastery over both Capua and Naples. With surprising moderation, he did not, however, alter the municipal liberties of that great city; nor even did he throw over the supreme “Magistracy” of Sergius; contenting himself with receiving the oaths of *fealty* and allegiance of the latter, in his quality of Suzerain.¹

¹ Alex. Telesus. L. ii., c. 67., p. 638.

But the growing and apparently irresistible power of Roger had created infinite alarm in the mind of the German Emperor, Lothair. And when Louis le Gros and the great St. Bernard urged upon him the cause of Innocent II. (after the Council of Rheims, in which Anacletus, his aiders and abettors, were all excommunicated), he was well disposed to give them the most cordial welcome, as he foresaw the probable supremacy of the prepotent Normans over the whole southern soil.

But before the Emperor would march into Italy, he required the great question of the *ecclesiastical investitures, and of the revenues of the territories of the Countess Matilda* (the source of unceasing disputes)—which revenues the ambition and cunning of Hildebrand had wrested from the Empire—should be restored. Innocent II., accompanied by St. Bernard, went, however, in person to the abode of Lothair; and there the Emperor covenanted to replace Innocent on the chair of St. Peter; and, in return, “the right of the ecclesiastical investiture and the pastoral ring and staff” were granted to him.¹ On paying an annual tribute of 100 lire to the Pope, he was also reinstated in the possession of the revenues of the Imperial fiefs, held by the Countess Matilda. There is no reason to doubt that Lothair was as anxious as the Pope to fulfil his part of the treaty, as the lucrative privilege he had at last obtained was to be continued after his death to his son-in-law, “Henry the Haughty.” But his own elevation to the throne of Germany had been hotly contested by the partisans of Conrad of Hohenstauffen (or “Ghibellines,” as they then began to be called). The great Lombard feudatories also took the side of Conrad (who was cousin german of the late Emperor Henry V.), and crowned him at Mouza with the Iron Crown.

The rival emperors naturally espoused the pretensions of the antagonistic Pontiffs; it sufficed that Lothair pro-

¹ Petri Dicon. Chron. Cassin. L. iv., c. 97., p. 555. The Bull is to be found, *Annal Eccl.*, 1133, § vi.

tested Innocent II., for Conrad to declare in favour of Anacletus. But the parties were too equally balanced in Rome to permit of a decisive battle on either side; and after much angry contentions and skirmishing, Anacletus kept his position on the right bank of the Tiber, and Innocent took his abode in the Lateran, where he conferred the golden crown of empire on Lothair, June 4, 1133.¹ During this time the insurrectionary party in the southern provinces, favoured by Rome and by Lothair, had made several open attempts at revolt against the hard-handed oppressors, but had been always put down by the Normans. When the presence of the Emperor in the Abruzzi, under colour of supporting Pope Innocent II. revived all hopes, several cities, between the river Pescara and Bari, submitted to him as the commander of the Papal forces (for, in his "treaty" with Innocent, no allusion had ever been made to the former grant of investiture made by Lothair, giving him a pretended *supremacy in the South of Italy*). Robert of Capua was now restored to his paternal inheritance, and Naples was freed from the Normans, and garrisoned by three thousand Germans.

Roger, checked for the moment, took refuge in Sicily, but a quarrel speedily arose between the Emperor and the Pope, for the Suzerainty of Apulia (the province the allied forces next proceeded to invade). Lothair insisted on interpreting, in his own favour, the diploma of investiture granted to Drogone (as may be remembered) by Henry III. And the Pope answered by showing upwards of a century's unquestioned homage to the Church, as a *title* significant above every other, being backed by actual fact. As neither party would yield, the solution of the difficulty was adjourned; and it was agreed that, for the moment, the province should be governed in the joint names of the "Pope and the

¹ This is the text of Lothair's oath. "Ego L. rex promitto et juro tibi D. papæ Inn. tuisque successoribus securitatem vitæ et in membris et malæ captionis; et defendere papatum et honorem tuum; et regalia Sancti Petri quæ habes manutenere et quæ non habes juxta meum posse recuperare. Annal. Ecclesias. T. xviii., p. 188.

Emperor." As a visible proof of this, to all the assistants of the investiture of Count Rudolf of Airolo, the latter received the investiture, both from Lothair and Innocent, whilst both of them grasped firmly the staff of the standard, which they placed in his right hand.¹

The allies next disputed the possession of Salerno, the ancient Longobard capital of Southern Italy. Gregory VII., it will be remembered, had been a voluntary exile there, after the Sack of Rome. There he had yielded up his majestic and afflicted spirit. Since that time the city had always been considered a dependence of Rome, and the Church had uniformly denied its being an integral part of the province of Apulia; and on this point also the Pope and the Emperor could not agree.²

The dispute never was settled, for Lothair died in the Tyrol in the year A.D. 1137, after a reign of twelve years. Death, it may be observed, always did prove itself a powerful aid to Norman ambition. From his campaign in Southern Italy, Innocent II. returned to his habitation in the Lateran at Rome. This overlooked the quarters of the Celium and the Coliseum, formerly the glory of the city, but which were now reduced almost to a desert by the sack of Rome, under the mixed bands of Robert Guiscard.

On the opposite bank of the Tiber, Anacletus had fortified himself in the tomb of Hadrian and the partisans of both Pontiffs lost no occasion of filling the city with clamour, bloodshed, and contention as often as possible. Roger promptly seized the favourable opportunity of avenging himself and regaining his lost ground. Apulia was unable to defend itself from him, unprotected by the Imperial troops. Salerno surrendered voluntarily; Capua was taken by assault, savagely plundered, and razed to the ground, as a warning to other cities. The party of Anacletus was about to triumph in the south of Italy when the anti-pope died, January, 1138.

¹ "Apost. accepto vexillo a superiori parte, Imp. ab inferiori, Raydulfum de dicat. Apul. investiverunt." Roumald. Salern., p. 189.

² "Quæ res inter pontificem et Cæsarem dissentionem maximam ministravit." Petr. Diacon. p. 591.

Events now took a somewhat unexpected turn, and the career of Roger was threatened with a new curb.

The section of the Cardinals who had favoured Anacletus now elected a new anti-pope under the name of Victor IV.¹ But the eloquence of St. Bernard, and the reverence in which he was held, were nobly displayed in the restoration of peace to the Church, after eight years of discord ; for he persuaded Victor to resign, and thus left Innocent II. undisturbed possessor of the Pontificate. Quarrels and agitation, however, prevailed, through other causes, in Germany and Italy.

In Germany, the empire was contested by Henry the Haughty, Duke of Bavaria, son-in-law of Lothair, and Conrad, of Hohenstauffen, already elected once, but who had laid by his claims in favour of Lothair. Henry the Haughty was by far the wealthiest and most powerful of the German princes ; and in right of the treaty stipulated between Lothair and Innocent II., he had a great hold on the wealthy *central provinces of Italy* (the endowment of the famous Countess Matilda to the Church). But the Germans, fearing the enormous preponderance of power which this cumulated wealth might create, were the more inclined to Conrad. They dreaded, if Henry were elected, he would make the empire hereditary, as the Normans had done their royalty in Sicily.

Affairs in Germany being thus too much troubled to give Innocent II. any uneasiness (through fear of interference in Italy), he thought the time opportune to revenge himself on the aiders and abettors of the late anti-pope, Anacletus, and, accordingly, he excommunicated Roger and all his adherents.

For the third time in their eventful history, the Normans opposed the "arm of the flesh" to the "weapons of theology." No sooner was the sentence launched than Roger marched on the Papal troops, met them in the Terra di Lavoro, and gave them a sanguinary and complete defeat.

¹ Falcon. Benevent. Chron. ann. 1136., p. 127. Cherrier, Histoire, Vol. i., p. 92.

Encamped between Teano and San Germano, near the territory of Gallucchio, they fell into an ambushade, and were cut to pieces by the Normans, led by a son of Roger. The Pontiff, and most of the Cardinals who accompanied him, fell into the hands of the foe; all their baggage and treasures became the prey of the latter, and the Normans divided their spoils under the very eyes of the Pope.¹

As assistance could not be hoped for from Germany, this defeat of the Pontifical army placed the entire government of Southern Italy in the hands of Roger, and the same scene as had been enacted at Civitella was repeated at Teano. The army, prostrate, and throwing dust on their heads, craved the "pardon and blessing" of the "Apostle" (as it was the custom to style the Pontiff in those days), but kept firm hold of the territories and the earthly treasures they had won. Innocent II., a prisoner like his predecessors, was constrained, like them, to abandon his allies, to revoke his ecclesiastical censures, and to grant "to Roger the royal prerogative and investiture of the kingdom of Naples and Sicily, with remainder to his heirs for ever."

The Bull of Investiture granted by Innocent II. to Roger I. is dated July 27, 1139. (The former grant had been made by Anacletus, in 1130; but as Innocent did not choose to admit that the "anti-pope" had a right of investiture the mere "fact" is attributed in it to Honorius II.)¹ Besides the homage tendered to the supreme Pontiff as suzerain lord, Roger covenanted to pay him an annual tribute of 600 schifati as a duty on the document of the treaty, to be paid in coin of the realm.

The Pope, in the same Bull which announces Roger's elevation, transfers his spiritual menaces to *all who may now oppose the rights of the present possessors*. "Any rebel to the Normans, will," he says, "whether lay or ecclesiastical, incur the indignation of God and of His

¹ Falcon. Benevent. p. 129.

² Annal. Eccl., Anno 1130. T. xviii.

blessed Apostles, Peter and Paul, until he has retracted from the fact" (*falto emmenda*). "Until such time any such party or parties," he adds, "are to remain under curse. Amen."¹

The inhabitants of the southern provinces, hopeless of succour after this, ceased overt rebellion; and the boundaries of the kingdom were fixed, as they remained until our own day. Thus the valour and statesmanship of a distant and far from numerous people had, in about a century, succeeded in defeating the Church, the Greeks, the Longobards, the Saracens—all immeasurably superior in numbers and in resources to themselves; and though opposed by the hatred of the trampled populations and the ambition of dispossessed princes, and in defiance of the severest censures of the Church, they had won a noble and a wealthy kingdom.

As far as can be discerned by the dim lights of the chronicles that remain to us, the secret of the success of the Normans lay in their concentration of all their efforts on the sole act of governing their territories. All the details of commerce, religion, law, and customs they seem to have left untouched. Whether by force of statecraft, or by reason of the absolute impossibility of sparing time or thought from the mere grasp of the soil, we cannot now determine. They were a hard, hated race, who put the feudal system in thorough practice; but they avoided the cardinal error of most conquerors, the intolerable meddlesomeness with what does not relate to rule; and there was nothing to prevent Naples and Sicily from flourishing (as Normandy did under the rule of the "Dukes," as compared with the rest of France).

Roger, king of Sicily, though formally invested with all the royal dignities and titles he coveted, did not lay aside the vigilant statecraft which was the great characteristic of his race. He was an ardent and politic adherent of the Crusade preached by St. Bernard. Nor

¹ This forms part of the pre-cited document, *Annal. Eccles.*, T. xviii., p. 586. It is signed by Innocent, Bishop of the Roman Church, Alberic, Bishop of Ostia, Humeric, Cardinal Deacon, S.C.R., K.R.E., 1139.

was there anything apparently unreasonable after the conquest of Sicily and of Southern Italy, in the hope that fortune might favour the Norman arms in the Levant, when sanctioned by all the "benedictions" and encouraged by all the indulgences of Rome.

Norman vessels of transport were offered to Louis the Young, to convey his troops to Palestine; and when the king of France preferred another route, Roger undertook an expedition to the East on his own account. All the lawless adventurers, and impoverished men-at-arms in his service, were encouraged to seek the absolution of their sins, and the improvement of their fortunes by engaging in the Crusade. The fleet of Roger began by capturing Tripoli and subjecting it, and several other maritime cities, to become tributaries of Sicily.¹

Another expedition was sent out against the Greek Emperor, who had thrown the ambassadors of Roger into prison. Corfu was assaulted; the Normans crossed the Peloponnesus and Achaia; and but for the Venetians who, with a fleet of sixty galleys, defended Constantinople, might have not improbably raised their standard on the walls of the capital itself.

The Normans returned to Sicily enriched with spoil, and bringing with them prisoners from Athens and Thebes, acquainted with the management of the silkworm, who taught the Sicilians that lucrative and beautiful branch of commerce, and of manufactures—the preparation of the cocoons, and the weaving and dyeing of silken fabrics.²

All the successive Norman Kings, Roger II., William I., or the Bad, William II., or the Good, kept their covetous and ambitious eyes fixed on the East, and sent at various times piratical excursions into the Ionian Sea, to ravage the coasts and carry off the natives as captives.

One Greek Emperor, Emmanuel Comnenus, in the year 1155, retaliated by an excursion into Apulia; but the restless rapacity and warlike abilities of the Normans

¹ Michaud. *Histoire des Croisades*. L. vi., T. ii., p. 136.

² Othon. Freising. Chron., p. 668.

might have been successful in dismembering the Greek Empire, had not another power, that of the jealous, war-like and commercial Venetians, come to the rescue of the latter.

The internal rule of the Normans was not in itself devoid of many admirable points. The liberties of the great municipalities were respected; justice was tolerably well administered, and it is significant of the bolder and manlier Northern race that "prevarication," the besetting taint of the southern people, was branded with "infamy" in a judge. So long as the royal power was acknowledged and implicitly obeyed, every man was permitted to follow his own customs and his own religion. But it was not in the nature of things that the rule of the Normans could ever be popular; their small number alone sufficed to be an eternal reproach and irritation to the millions who were compelled to submit to this handful of adventurers. Nor was it possible for those same populations to avoid seeing, in the castles, fortresses, the strongholds and fortifications everywhere bristling the country, the threats of a still severer tyranny, and more thorough subjection for the future.

The very lowest class of the natives was indeed liberated from bondage by a law of the twelfth century, and thus the crime of actual "slave dealing" may be taken off the catalogue of the Norman's offences; but it is important to observe that immense territories hitherto possessed by towns as "common lands" were at this period either assigned as the prey of the great "feudal lords," or made over to the Church under the title of *Demanio*, or "allodial domains."

Eight hundred years after this appropriation of the common lands, in the year 1859, this question again convulsed Sicily and steeped it in blood. Ancient charters were produced proving the rights of towns to common lands, before the *feudal* and *Church misappropriations*; and one of the secrets of the facility with which the Bourbons were overthrown was the hope and belief of the "restoration" to the cities of these very lands.

It is obvious that the *confiscation of their common lands*

was, under the regimen of the Normans, a mortal blow to the educated and therefore more dangerous classes of the towns. And perhaps it was the bargain the Church had made for itself, in the act of spoliation, that caused the law to be proclaimed, pronouncing "every act of opposition to the will of Roger as *sacrilege*." The very humblest class were no doubt benefited by the stern justice of the Normans, who condemned the corrupt and unjust judge to death.¹ But it is not difficult to perceive the causes of the decay of the internal cities under their rule, though commerce maintained the prosperity of the maritime ones flourishing until a later period.

Palermo was the favourite city of the Normans, and the kings dwelt there surrounded by an Eastern splendour and all the luxuries of wealth and conquest. We even hear of the Oriental custom prevailing of raising the eunuchs to high posts of trust in the state. The tragic fate of one of these, a converted Mussulman named Philip, whom king Roger had made admiral, may show the savage manners of the times, when jealousy of a favourite had resolved his destruction.

Philip had greatly distinguished himself during the expedition to Africa, and had taken Ipponā in the year 1149. His enemies accused him of eating meat in Lent, and of having sent offerings to the shrine of Mahomet. No proofs were, however, offered. It is probable the real crimes of Philip were his wealth, his talents, and his influence. He was, in spite of his innocence, delivered over to the hands of his assassins, and burnt at the stake, his ashes being scattered to the winds by the common hangman. As religious intolerance, and that bloody craft which afterwards debased Sicily, was not the crime or the folly of the Normans, this stain on the memory of Roger has all the air of a political sacrifice.

The reign of William the Bad, who succeeded Roger 1153-66, was marked by every iniquity that a despotic and wicked king could indulge in, and a revolt ensued, to proclaim his son Roger, then a child of nine years of age,

¹ De pœna judicis qui male judicavit. L. ii., tit 4, Lex Rogerii.

king. But the rebellion was put down, and the career of William the Bad was unchecked till closed by death. His successor, William the Good, had all the great qualities of the Normans, and none of their vices ; even now the reign of this able and excellent monarch is considered by grateful tradition as the "golden age" of Sicily. In him the direct line of Robert Guiscard closed, for the kingdom of Sicily passed to his sister Constance, who married Henry, Duke of Swabia, afterwards Henry VI., and who, January 28, 1194, gave birth to Frederick II., subsequently inheritor of the country, and of its disputes with the Papacy. This Princess is alluded to by Dante, who, speaking of her issue, says :

*" Questa è la luce della gran Costanza,
Che del secondo vento di Soave,
Generò il terzo, e l'ultima possanza."*

The subjection of the great territories of Naples and Sicily to the Normans, in spite of the hostilities of the natives, is an historical problem which has not yet been investigated as it deserves. When the great superiority of their Saracen "light infantry" is admitted, and the resistlessness of their own charges of horse are considered even, still, their insignificant numbers lead us to reflect with amazement on their triumphs—the more, that Southern Italy is not an open country, where heavy cavalry charges can act with advantage—it is, on the contrary, extremely mountainous, and cut by immense steep ravines, and by torrents, that sweep with resistless fury, when swollen by autumnal rains, or by the melting of the snows in spring. Terrific thunder storms and earthquakes, still more terrible to the Northerners, frequently convulse these regions ; and we have evidence left to prove that they were well peopled, and by a hardy and prosperous population. Over these bold herdsmen, stout hunters, rich farmers, wealthy and enlightened merchants, we find a comparative handful of Northern pirates and adventurers succeed in putting a detested yoke. What was their secret of conquest ? An answer to this question seems difficult to give, at the present distance of time.

The history of Sicily, of the Normans, of the Hohenstauffens; and the glories of the revival of letters, science, and art are too indelibly blended with the Capital of the island, Palermo (where the chiefs, kings, and emperors held their Court; a city splendid and celebrated before any of the others of Italy were worthy of mention, in monuments of art and luxury) to permit us to close this chapter without some notice of it.

Recalling by her brilliancy and beauty of architecture something of Bagdad and of Cordova, Pagan, Jewish, Saracen, and Christian monuments and architecture were all found flourishing within its walls; as likewise the fruits of the South, and those of the North, grew with equal luxuriance on its richly irrigated plains. The palm and the oak shaded its lovely summer retreats. Classical columns and friezes, Saracenic arches and twisted pillars;¹ and the commanding majesty of the Christian cathedral, all blended under the matchless sky, and were reflected in the translucent seas.

A learned Arab,² who visited the city in the reign of William the Good, describes it thus:—"Palermo, or the '*Capital*,' as the Mussulmans call it, unites commodiousness with splendour of appearance and wealth. The city is of ancient and elegant structure, pleasing and magnificent to behold, and is proudly situated in the midst of broad squares, and broadly-stretching plains; it is remarkable for wide streets, spacious roads, and dazzling beauty of aspect. This city of marvels is constructed somewhat after the fashion of Cordova, and is built of solid stone called El-Kiddan (in Italian, '*pietra dell' aspra*')"; is traversed by a water-course, is enriched by the presence of four fountains, and the royal abodes (palaces) encircle it like a necklace round a young maiden's throat, so fair and beautifully are they disposed. How numberless are the beautiful

¹ This Oriental twisted pillar is copied from "The Pillar of Fire."

² Description of Palermo by the Arab, Mahommed-ben-Djobair, of Valencia, who visited Sicily during the reign of William II. Extract translated from the Arab original by the Senatore Michele Amari.

Pavilions, Kiosks, Vedette and Belvederes possessed by the King! May they serve to better use!"

(After this deprecatory exclamation, quaint in its racy sincerity, the good Arab proceeds.)

"The Mussulmans at Palermo are still allowed the enjoyment of most of their *Mosques*, which are kept in excellent condition; they are aroused to prayer by the voice of the Moezzin. Their habitual residence, however, is within the city suburbs, where they keep themselves, apart from the Christians, and live a separate community. Palermo is the residence of a 'Cadi' who adjusts their quarrels, and to whom they apply in cases of difficulty. They also unite in prayer within a principal mosque, which serves as a place of assembly for the larger proportion of the congregation; other innumerable mosques are used as schools for the teaching of the Koran.

"One great point of resemblance between this city and Cordova is in the situation of the 'Kasar,' or ancient city, which stands enshrined within the new city. Graceful and magnificent buildings, high-turreted palaces and towers, arise aloft within it, whilst they dazzle and please the eye. The church of the *Martorana*, or '*dell' Antiocheno*,' as the Christians call it, is one of the most marvellous and beautiful of their works. Its front is quite unrivalled. In the interior of the building, the walls seem wrought of solid gold; slabs of marble adorn it, encrusted with gold mosaics, which charm and astonish the sight. This beautiful church, shaped like a mighty tower, is sustained by columns of marble, and is surmounted by a cupola. Altogether, it is a marvel of constructive art."¹

¹ The history of Sicily has been so little studied, and the knowledge of the origin of her "architectural monuments" has been hitherto so obscure, that the fact is only now dawning on the more "learned" world that these marvels, fruit of the splendid civilization of Byzantium, existed at a date anterior to that marking any other of the artistic wonders of Italy (if Rome, Ravenna, and the Neapolitan Provinces be excepted). The *official* introduction of the *Latin ritual*, which followed with the Normans; and the "High Suzerainty of the Pope," brought a consequent "modification" to art throughout the realm, the traces

Our Mussulman had an eye for female charms also, as he remarks :

“ The Christian dames of this city, both in the elegance of their movements and diction, and in the fashion of wearing their veil and mantle, closely imitate the Mussulman mode.”

We are reminded of the Arabian tales by these discreet hints, and readily fancy the lovely, dark-eyed dames and damsels charming the “ Arab ” by the mystery of what was hidden, as much as by the beauty that was revealed.

Many deeply interesting details of the Saracenic conquest of Sicily are given by the Senator Michael Amari, in his work *La Conquista de' Mussulmani in Sicilia*. Of all the conquerors of the island, the Saracens have, perhaps, left the deepest and most lasting traces. They transformed the fine Byzantine churches into mosques, and made use of the materials of some for their private edifices. Thus, a splendid tomb-palace was built at Palermo over the remains of Ibrahim-an-Achmet, killed at Cosenza, A.D. 902, as the Arabian historian Nawari tells us. In the year 936, the famous “ Khallessah,” or citadel, was built. It comprised, like the Kremlin of Moscow, many mosques, baths, offices, prisons, and government residences, in its circuit, and is described as a monument of infinite majesty and solid grandeur. After the year 948, the Mussulmans had been compelled to leave the Sicilians almost *independent* in their government ; and a period of comparative freedom and prosperity followed under the Kelbite Emirs. Arabic Sicilian poets flourished at this time, and were the precursors of the Italian bards.

Architecture was greatly attended to during this happy interval. Handsome mosques arose everywhere,

of which are distinctly visible. The transformation was effected in Sicily (at Palermo especially) through the medium of the Monks of Monte-Cassino (the latter monastery being the great nursery of Latin art in the southern provinces). They had been invited to the Island by King Roger, to superintend the new modifications to be wrought in the adornment of the churches, &c.

and the fortified cities were embellished with bastions and crenellated walls.

A native of Bagdad, Ebu-Hankal (960), expatiates on the beauty of the Kasar, or ancient town of Palermo, in the following terms:—

“The eye took in at a glance above three hundred mosques.¹ A broad, handsome, stone-paved street (a rarity in that age) ran arrow-straight through the centre, flanked by splendid shops and stores.”

He alludes to the handsome “Maaskar,” or barracks, a highly important and principal feature in the city; the “Khaleyah,” or fortress, and the beautiful “city gates,” nine in number, and the most beautiful of all, decorated with Cufic characters.

In the year 1093, the keen eye of Count Roger noticed the beauty of Palermo, in a charter of the date.

“The city,” he says, “contains the vast and imposing ruins of previous cities, fortresses, towers, palaces, and buildings of every kind; all giving evidence of the marvellous art and luxurious tastes of those infidels, who had fitted them as their residence.”

The part of Palermo which was undefended by walls was called the site “degli Schiavoni.”

All foreign tradesmen and workpeople resided there. Other sections of buildings (also extramural) were called “Regione-Nuova” and “della Moschea.” Many trades, and the traffic of money-changing, were carried on, in these regions. The butchers had “one hundred and fifty shops” inside the walls, and many others without them. The city was divided into five principal regions, or *rioni*, exclusive of one devoted entirely to Jews; and another, named “Abu-Himaz,” inhabited by the Mussulmans. The Maaskar, or barracks, also stood quite apart.

Another Arabian writer, Ebu-Hankal (cited by Amari),² notices the system of irrigation of the plain between the

¹ “The Senator M. Amari, in his work on the Mussulmans in Sicily, mentions their number as five hundred.

² Amari. *Mussulmani in Sicilia*, p. 299.

“Cassaro” and the region of the “Schiavoni.” The *Reed of Persia*, used for the penmanship of manuscripts, was carefully cultivated there, and also the enormous gourds which form so great a staple of food in the island. He also observes that the “papyrus,” or paper reed, which he had supposed to exist only in Egypt, was here grown on a great scale, for the fabrication of cordage; and he remarks that sheets of papyrus, for the personal use of the Sultan, were prepared at Palermo from these reeds.¹

The King's palace was designated emphatically as “Palazzo Nuovo”; it was built of the fine stone which created the admiration of the Arabian traveller, and was surrounded by massive walls. The apartments were adorned by the beautiful *Byzantine mosaics*, of which the roof of the Cappella Palatina affords surviving specimens. The interior part of the building was reserved for the sovereign. The suite and the guards resided in the surrounding buildings. Forming part of the palace, were the offices of the silk weavers: that priceless branch of industry, which was jealously regarded as a “Royal monopoly,” and which, for another century, was confined to Sicily, as well as the delicate and fanciful arts of embroidery with silk, gold, silver, jewellery, and pearls, was carried on under the Royal eye. Specimens of this wondrous art survive in church vestments and decorations of altars; their beauty defies description, and puts to shame the best modern imitation.

Our limits prevent our dwelling on the “Royal Chapel,” or on the cloister of Monreale. Every day these exquisite remains become familiar to a great number of learned men, and to a wider circle of artistic tastes. It cannot be too much observed that, whilst lavishing every resource of art and wealth in the service of their own religion, the

¹ It is not quite ascertained whether the paper flag is indigenous to Sicily, or whether it was introduced from Egypt by the Saracens and Greeks; it is, however, quite naturalized in the island. During the convulsions of the Middle Ages it was forgotten; but in the sixteenth century, after the draining of some marshes, it was found flourishing anew, and it continues thus to this day.

Normans trusted to its inherent purity and sublimity for its diffusion, and discouraged the ardent and violent proselytism of other nations. Count Roger of Sicily told St. Anselm of Canterbury, who urged on him the usual penal course of conversion of the Mahometans, that "he had no faith in these violent changes, and found those men the truest who followed most faithfully their original belief."

The Normans composed a code of good laws for their territories, and these were still more improved by the Emperor Frederick II., so that for a while the kingdom of the Two Sicilies seemed to flourish with a lustre that contrasted with the rest of Italy.

But the people never succeeded in freeing themselves from the dull, brutalising oppression of the "feudal system"; it survived all the changes of dynasty—Norman, Swabian, Arragonese, Angoino, Castilian, Bourbon; it was effaced but yesterday, and already, in the thirst for knowledge, and the aptitude for learning which distinguishes the heirs of the Grecian race, we may hope for a brighter future to those interesting and neglected people!

CHAPTER X.

Italian Communes—Frederick I.—Lombard League—Peace of Constance.

FORTY-SEVEN years after the first Crusade, Eugenius III. called upon the kings and princes of Christendom, in the year 1146, to undertake a second, and in obedience to the call of religion, no less than to that of ambition and avarice, Louis le Jeune of France, Conrad, Emperor of Germany, the Norman King of Sicily, and a vast number of powerful and adventurous barons, lords, and chiefs, with their followers, departed for the East.

This was a happy epoch, and an important date for the Communes of Italy, then rapidly rising in wealth and in power. The geographical position of the Peninsula, its fertile soil, and comparatively advanced husbandry, made it the nearest, and the natural magazine, from whence supplies of all kinds could be despatched to the Levant. Of the restless and aggressive country nobles, many thousands departed with their turbulent and sanguinary followers.¹ This of itself was an immense boon to the pursuits of lawful industry of the townsmen; and the wealth which commerce brought to the latter soon inspired them with the determination, and afforded them the means, of defending their new position.

Under the Romans, when cities enjoyed municipal privileges, and an independent jurisdiction, the adjoining lands to each town were the property of the community. But, under the Feudal rule, these lands became the prey of the great barons, and of ecclesiastical bodies, or of the bishops and archbishops, and these exercised, as may be supposed, a rule at once arbitrary, capricious, and

¹ The Tuscan nobles met at San Donato, on the Mugnone, to take the vows of the Second Crusades; all the coats of arms are preserved in the Villa.

sanguinary over the men of the cities ; more particularly with respect to rights of way, and toll of merchandise through baronial and ecclesiastical lands, and over bridges and ferries.

Happily these "robber chiefs" were commonly at war between each other, which rendered the task of reducing their numbers less hopeless than at first it seemed ; and in the tenth and eleventh centuries, we find the chronicles of central and upper Italy chiefly engrossed by the mutual aggressions, defeats, and victories of a thousand feudal chiefs, and the communes adjacent to them. Generally speaking, the latter were successful. For though the illustrious and historical names of the Counts Guidi, the Montefeltro, Ugucione della Faggiuola, and others, still tower throughout the Middle Ages ; yet at every step in Italy we come on the ruins of old castles and strongholds of the *Cattani*, or country nobility, also reduced to submission by the forces of the municipalities ; and the owners of which were compelled to enter the walled cities, and become enrolled on the lists of burghesses.

Very often, also, the step was taken voluntarily, from a taste for superior education, from a sense of security, and from a desire to share in the immense wealth which commerce, combined with adventure, brought to the mercantile guilds or "arti" of the towns. The *patti* or *conditions*, made between the municipalities and the country nobles, usually stipulated the residence of the latter for two months at least within the walls of the friendly city. The eminently social habits of the Italians speedily reconciled them to this change. As the older races of Lombard and German barons became extinct, and a new generation more immediately connected with the Italians arose, the compulsory residence became one of choice, and ever since has prevailed ; and the national peculiarity of the peninsula, the making of the City the home of the greatest families, has become so remarkable (in contradistinction to the customs of every other country) as to form a broad and definite line of demarcation between the Italian nobleman and his European peers.

At first the change was all to the benefit of humanity, and, with some sanguinary drawbacks, the system produced such effects during a period of upwards of five hundred years as must ever be memorable in the history of mankind. But as the other European countries gradually rose in civilization, and concentrated their powers in one head, the fatal effects of a multitude of petty powers, all detesting each other, became but too visible; and the want of patriotic feeling, feebly compensated for by a narrow "municipalism" (chiefly shown in compassing the ruin of other cities), led to that deplorable decrepitude from which the country is only now struggling to free itself.

To those nobles who preferred their airy and sylvan retreats, and their freedom, to the restraints of the City, the change was felt as a heavy grievance. Otto Frisingensis has a passage descriptive of their feelings under Frederick I. "The cities so much affect liberty, and are so solicitous to avoid the insolence of power, that almost all of them have thrown off every other authority, and are governed by their own Magistrates, insomuch that all that country is now filled with free cities, each of which have compelled their bishops to reside within their walls; and there is scarce any nobleman, how great soever his power may be, who is not subject to the laws and government of some city."

The Marquis of Montferrat, a feudal chief with vast possessions in the north of Italy, was almost the only Italian baron who preserved his independence, and had not become subject to the laws of any city.¹

The dignity of *burgess*, and the safety and comparative peace it ensured, were sufficient to tempt not only many laymen but ecclesiastics of the highest ranks to inscribe their names on the rolls of the cities.²

The Emperor, as sovereign, had originally a palace in almost every great city of Italy, in which he resided during his progress through, or residence in that Country; and the troops that accompanied him were quartered

¹ See Muratori, *Antichità Estensi*, Vol. i., p. 411, 412. ² *Ibid.* 179.

upon the citizens. But the latter now began to claim exemption from these ignominious and harassing claims of suzerainty. Some cities prevailed on the Emperors to engage that they would never enter their gates, but lodge without their walls.¹ Others obtained the imperial licence to pull down the imperial palaces within the gates, on the condition of building others in the suburbs. The hold of the Emperors over Italy was so slight, and their want of money always so pressing, that we find perpetually the widest range of privileges, conceded by the imperial governments to the Cities, for the most trifling pecuniary compensations; and we are led to comprehend how, when the rule of the municipalities became so harsh and so burdensome, and their rivalries so bloody and inveterate, the Ghibelline feeling was long so warmly cherished in the Peninsula, and why it was so little really oppressive except in such instances as that of which we are about to treat.

To realise to ourselves the unspeakable blessing of a Crusade preached in Italy, we must fully understand what was meant, in the year 1146, by the "followers" of the rural nobles. These were partly serfs, and partly freemen, called *uomini di masnada* (from whence the term of "*masnadieri*," perpetually recurring in mediæval Italian history, as synonymous for mercenary and reckless adventurers with arms, at the pay of every chief). These men entered into formal engagements of military service for stipulated advantages, and could not release themselves without a regular deed of manumission; and the usage prevailed all over Italy of hiring them, as the nobles were incessantly at war upon each other. To these men lands were easily granted, and they formed a class entirely different from the *vassi*, or vassals, and *vavasours*. The first were vassals of the Crown; the second were those of the great lords, and the *vavasours* were vassals again of the greater vassals.

The union of the "Servi" (slaves or vassals) of a great chief was called a "*masnada*" (or troop). They

¹ Chart. Henry IV., Murat. ib. 24.

were often taken into the pay of the greater cities, when the civic troops had retired from their compulsory terms of service to their peaceful homesteads and mercantile pursuits, or when war was not of sufficient moment to call forth the sacred "Car" or *Carroccio*¹ with its guard of honour, invariably composed of the best blood of the city.

The distinctive class of "Cavalleria," with the outward ceremonies of investiture, were not neglected either in Italy; though chivalry, as we understand the term, was never in the same esteem in the Peninsula as it was beyond the Alps.

The ceremonies of Chivalry were usually performed on some great festival. A golden fringe was added to the hold of a knight, and the gilt spurs and sword handle were allotted to him. But though Italy produced the finest armour and the best tempered weapons in the world, the distinction of knighthood was less the

¹ The "Carroccio," or war chariot, so dear to every Italian city, and sometimes even adopted by the Imperialists, was a heavy, low car, painted crimson, and supported on massive wheels of enormous strength; paintings of it may be seen in the Library of the Uffizj. It was drawn on great occasions by four yoke of oxen; both car and oxen were covered with the woollen cloths still used in Tuscany, and now usually dyed crimson, but then commonly green, until the ancestor of the Rucellai family brought from the East, after the Crusade in which Barbarossa died, the art of dyeing red with the root of the madder plant, from which the great wealth of the family was derived. This car bore the great standard of the City, surmounted by the image of its Patron Saint; or sometimes that of our Saviour on a golden globe, or a crucifix. A priest and an altar, at which mass was celebrated, invariably occupied the interior; and a band of honour, of the noblest and bravest youths of the city, accompanied it, and were bound to die in its defence, and to protect it even from insult, as every injury and affront offered to the Carroccio was considered as touching the honour of the place, and resented as personal. It naturally followed that, when it fell into the hands of the enemy, every indignity was studiously offered to it; the coverings were dragged in the mire; the standard cut down, the car itself hacked to pieces, and the banner reserved to adorn a triumph. It was in one of these small rival contests that a "Guelph" carroccio was taken by the Ghibellines; and the Guelph annalist so bitterly complains that the "insolent" foe slew the oxen, roasted them by the wood of the car, and offered to the captives a portion of the repast! The invention of the carroccio (evidently derived from the Sacred Ark of the Hebrews) is due to Heribert, Archbishop of Milan, who first sent it forth with the army against Conrad, the Saalic.

reward of prowess on the battle-field, than a purely patrician distinction of *caste*, as in ancient Rome.

Peculiar to Italy is the creation of the Knights of the Shield, or "*scudo*." These were created by the *people*, or by the great lords. On such occasions the *scudo*, or shield bearing arms, was granted; and the recipient was ennobled, or *made free*, and suffered to bear arms that could be inscribed on the "*golden book*," or rolls of the city.

Although the occupation of the lives of most of the citizens and lords of the tenth, eleventh, and twelfth centuries was chiefly to harass, plunder, and torment, yet there were quaint, homely laws held in honour, under which the process was conducted. For example: the *guerra guerriata*, or predatory desultory war (so common between rival cities), was expected, by general rule, to begin in May. Herald's were sent to challenge a fight (often at some spot in preference to another, and frequently on some special day), and bells rung loudly to announce to the foe the hostile forces marching against him.

Standing armies were equally unknown to the Emperors. Their forces were composed of feudal vassals and their retainers. The latter were bound to pay and provide as they could for the support of their followers. Hospitals and magazines hardly existed. Bodies of the religious orders sometimes received the wounded, and partisans or private speculation collected as they could provisions and forage. It seems hardly reconcileable with this state of things when we read of the "*great wealth and rapid development of Italy*" in the eleventh, twelfth, and thirteenth centuries; but under so beneficent a sky, and with a soil so fertile, the utmost man can do is to check, but never destroy, the resources of inexhaustible nature.

The persecution of the lesser by the greater Italian cities began early. The Northern municipalities led the van in evil as in good. As they were the first to emancipate themselves from feudal bondage, so they first gave the example of enforcing their own dominion upon the neighbouring towns. The insolent

pretensions of Milan over Pavia and Lodi brought ruin on both. The latter city was levelled to the earth by the barbarous cruelty of Milan, and the wretched inhabitants were compelled to seek refuge in six collections of rude hovels, hastily gathered up out of the commonest materials, in the open country. Cremona and Novara sided with Pavia; but Tortona, Crema, Bergamo, Brescia, and Piacenza allied themselves to Milan. Turin also began to show symptoms of revolt against the Lords of Savoy, who, under the title of Imperial Vicars, ruled with lawless despotism over their rich domains. Besides the Dukes of Savoy, the Marquises of Montferrat were almost the only independent feudal lords remaining. Asti even was a free city: Verona, Padua, Vicenza, Treviso, and Mantua were all free, as well as prosperous. Bologna, with her great university, stood apart, a centre, as it were, of another light, the lustre of which was neither that of arms, nor that of commerce. Reggio and Modena were allied to her, and inhabited by a bold and manly race, half herdsmen and half warriors. Ferrara, Ravenna, Tortona, and Faenza, also her allies, were, in like manner, the homes of hard-fighting men. Florence had acted as mediator in the league of free Tuscan cities; and was already more distinguished for her advancement in the science of politics, and in that of commerce, than in arms. Pistoia, San Miniato-al-Tedesco, Arezzo, and Volterra were all free. So were Lucca (the ancient capital of Tuscany), Cortona, Perugia, and Siena. The deaths and extinction of the Dukes of Spoleto had given liberty to many cities; and the great Countess Matilda had been the last of the "absolute" rulers of Tuscany.

Even Rome did not remain unmoved amidst this general uprising of the national mind. Translations from ancient authors caused ideas to circulate at that time, which revived her slumbering traditions, and awoke something of a momentary and generous ardour in her populations.

The eloquence and genius of Abelard (displayed from

his chair in the Sorbonne, in Paris) had aroused the faculties of "thinking men," and a vehement admiration for republican heroes, as well as contempt for the corruptions and laxity of hierarchical morals, had prepared the Romans to seize any pretext for a revolt. It was not long in presenting itself. Innocent II., on acquiring his full and undisturbed Pontifical authority, had endeavoured to check the petty aggressions which kept the Romans and the inhabitants of Tivoli at incessant feud. This sufficed for the excuse of revolt. The Roman prefect, who, according to circumstances, was sometimes nominated by the Pope, and at others by the Emperor, was compelled to leave the city. The administration was remodelled under a patrician, who stood at the head of affairs, and of fifty senators. The decree which mentions this describes it as "the first year of the renewal of the senate." The republican form of government was proclaimed, and the new body politic assumed rights and privileges heretofore enjoyed solely by the Popes. The palaces and towers of obnoxious prelates were destroyed, and their property was dispersed and pillaged by the mob.

At this critical moment an enthusiastic disciple of Abelard, and one who possessed no small share of his persuasive eloquence, enhanced by a life of spotless austerity, a monk of Brescia, named Arnaldo, was recalled from Germany (whither he had sought refuge from the censures of a general council at the Lateran in 1139) to Rome, and placed in a position of almost absolute power.

Arnaldo was already celebrated in upper Italy by his revolutionary doctrines, and by his denunciations against the sloth, corruption, and vices of the hierarchical orders. He considered the outward forms of religion, the worship of the cross, the rite of infant baptism, the sacrifice of the mass, and the offices of prayers for the dead, as matters of little moment compared to that lofty spiritual faith and purity, of which he was himself an example.

He boldly condemned the abuses of the temporal power

of the clergy; taught that the supreme Pontiff was but the "Bishop" superior of the *clergy*, and that the latter possessed no *divine right* to superior sanctity over the *laity*.

In those days, when books could hardly be said to exist in any practical sense, all who would now be the readers of a man's works were then his "hearers," and flocks gathered round a favourite teacher from all parts of Europe; it can readily be understood how fanatical was the idolatry he inspired, more especially when he was in his own person an example of self-denying and lofty virtue. Nor can we blame the mistakes into which an ardent and generous but inexperienced generation fell, when we have seen so many attempts in after times fail, by enthusiasts more enlightened, to restore to Rome her former grandeur, and her former place amongst nations.

Innocent II., disheartened and dismayed at finding Rome eluding his authority (and, instead, eagerly seeking the counsels of Arnaldo), addressed letters of prayer for assistance to the German Emperor. The head of the Senate appealed in like manner to Cæsar, and called for the presence of the Emperor in Rome, "to revive the splendours of the state, once of Justinian and Constantine, whilst the Senate and the Roman people were now also to govern."

The Pope demanded aid from the Republican party (established 24th September, 1143). Neither of these appeals received an answer, and Innocent II., unable to stem the adverse current of the day, died broken-hearted.

Lucius II., his successor, perished of a wound received in the assault of the capital; Eugenius III. was forced to flee from Rome, and for nearly ten successive years the person of the Pontiff was so little respected by his own subjects that the head of the Church and the nominal chief of the Italian leagued cities was in perpetual danger of death, or of insult, when the change of sovereigns in Germany opened a new era to both Italy and to the Papacy.

In Germany the Emperor Conrad expired in the year

1152. To avert the evils of a protracted minority, he had recommended the choice of Frederick of Swabia, his nephew, in preference to his own son, an infant of but a few months old, to be his successor. The new Emperor was the son of Frederick II., Duke of Swabia, sur-named the Blind,¹ and his mother was Judith, daughter of the Duke of Bavaria. He therefore united in his person the antagonistic pretensions of the "Guelph and Ghibelline" parties. He was thirty-one years of age when the Diet of Frankfurt confirmed the magnanimous and patriotic wish of Conrad, by electing him, 5th March, 1152, and he was soon after crowned at Aix-la-Chapelle.

In Germany, the memory of this bold, accomplished, able, and popular sovereign is still cherished in legend and in lay. He almost corresponds to the romantic ideal of Richard Cœur-de-Lion in England, but we shall have occasion to dwell on a different and a darker side of his nature in his dealings with Italy.

At the commencement of his reign the Pope sent his legates to him to entreat his aid, to enable him to return to Rome, from whence he had been driven, a refugee, on the chance aid and hospitality of anyone pious enough or powerful enough to afford him shelter; he offered him, at the same time, as a recompense, the crown of the Empire, to be received from his hands in the Eternal City.

After the usual preliminaries, we find the following amongst the principal clauses of the treaty:—"The Lord King of the Romans, &c. &c., swears neither to make peace nor truce, either with the Romans or with Roger, King of Sicily, without the will or consent of the Lord Pope or his successors. He will make every effort for the repristination of the Papal authority in Rome, as it existed during the late century. He will maintain and support the power and prerogatives of the sovereign Pontiff, and aid him in obtaining the homage of 'Regalia,'

¹ This family is first mentioned in the eleventh century, when Frederick de Buren, a follower of Henry IV., possessed of lands in Franconia and Swabia, caused the castle of Hohenstauffen to be built on the heights of Goppingen, and from this the family took its name.

and all such other privileges as may have been usurped. He promises he will oppose any attempt at invasion on the part of the Greek Emperor, and promises to expel him from the territory of Italy with all speed."

The Lord Pope, on the other hand, "with the advice of his brethren, the Cardinals," engages to "honour the King of the Romans (such was the title of the German sovereign before assuming the Golden Crown in Rome) as a delectable son of the Church, to whom he promises the endowment of the 'Imperial Crown' whensoever he may come forward to receive it. He will aid him on all occasions to preserve and extend the Imperial rights. Again, should anyone attempt to elude the grasp of the sovereign legal jurisdiction of the above-named king, or be remiss in recognising his rightful prerogatives to such, the Lord Pope, after giving canonical notice of the default to the offender, will, on finding him still impenitent, strike him with excommunication.

"It is desired that all the above clauses should be carried out in good faith without tergiversation, and that their text should be maintained in its integrity unchanged, save by the express will of the Pope and of the head of the Empire."

Shortly after this treaty had been concluded, a circumstance, apparently trivial, but which proved the first of a series of the most important political changes, drew the attention of the new sovereign to Italy.

The tyrannical and disastrous persecution of Lodi by the city of Milan had now lasted forty-two years; and two natives of the oppressed province sought the presence of Frederick, and, explaining their cruel misery, entreated his protection and succour.

Struck by the justice of their cause, and glad to be of service to his Lombard subjects, Frederick sent peremptory orders to the magistrates of Milan to stop their course of persecution of Lodi, and to restore the city to its inhabitants, with all the privileges it had enjoyed before they were so savagely despoiled.

On receiving this *decree* the Milanese convened a gene-

ral assembly, at which it was publicly read, then torn into fragments, and finally trampled upon in the dust.¹ On hearing of this act of defiance, Frederick perceived it was a challenge to fight, and in October, 1154, he crossed the Alps with a powerful force, accompanied by many of his feudal barons. The strife between the cities of upper Italy had not been in any way composed, but the greater wealth and power of Milan bade fair to destroy smaller competitors. Hitherto it had been faithful to the Empire, hence Frederick's wrath at the insult he had received from it. He now placed it under the ban of the Empire, withdrew its chief privileges, and even transferred its right of *coining money* to the rival town of Cremona. Milan, in retaliation, publicly renounced the Imperial allegiance, and its rival Pavia as suddenly took the oaths to the Empire out of mere spite against Milan. The opening of Frederick's first Italian campaign is incomprehensible to us. Instead of concentrating his forces, and crushing the chief rebellious city, he spent six weeks on the siege of Tortona, which was finally taken and razed to the ground.²

Meanwhile, death had taken away Eugenius III. and his successor, Anastasius IV., whose tottering age made way for a Pontiff of another mould, the Englishman Breakspeare, Adrian IV.

He instantly demanded of Frederick the literal fulfilment of the treaty stipulated between the Papacy and the Empire under Eugenius III. Frederick I., eager to grasp the Imperial crown, made a triumphal entry into Pavia, and leaving for the moment all further designs on Lombardy, pressed forward towards Rome. But ere he obtained the diadem, opposition broke out from an unexpected quarter. The Senate and people of Rome, after a pompous display of hostile language, declared themselves adverse to Frederick. On the other hand, Adrian IV. had not yet been able to obtain possession of the government of Rome. Like all men who have risen from the

¹ Othon. Morena. Hist. Laudens, ap. Muratori, T. vi., p. 957-65.

² Sire Raul, p. 1175.

very humblest classes of society by pure force of talent and perseverance, Nicholas Breakspeare, better known as Adrian IV., brought to the exercise of power all the unflinching determination of individual courage and contempt of his opponents, and bent his whole mind on the restoration of the Papal power. Revolts speedily broke out between his partisans and the Romans, and in one tumult a cardinal about to flee the city was assassinated. Adrian laid directly a solemn interdict on Rome. A cessation of all holy ceremonies, of all joyous recreations, of all the external tokens of communion with the Church followed, and this gloom and separation from the ritual of Rome fell heavily on the populace, especially as the season of Easter approached.¹

The greater mass of the inhabitants proclaimed themselves penitents, and demanded a return to the communion of the Church, and Arnaldo da Brescia (who had been the chief instigator of rebellion) sought refuge in Campagna, from whence, nevertheless, he still exercised sufficient influence to keep the Pope from entering Rome.

Frederick and Adrian, therefore, met at Campo-grasso, near Nepi, where, at the outset, the Emperor refused to comply with the Roman ceremonial, which enjoined on him to hold the stirrup of the Papal mule when the Pontiff dismounted; on which the latter, quite as angrily, refused the peace-offering of a kiss, usual on similar occasions.

After great efforts were made, and Frederick was convinced that the Emperor Lothair had held the Pope's stirrup before him, he was persuaded to comply; but under protest that the homage was rendered "to Saint Peter, and not to the person of Adrian IV."

The first stipulation between the Emperor and the Pope was the immediate death by fire of Arnaldo da Brescia.² The Emperor was even more bent on the speedy execution of this deadly foe than was the Pope. By his commands

¹ Card. Aragon. In Vita Adrian IV., ap Murat. Tom. iii., pt. i., p. 442.

² Otton. Frising. Chron. i., ii., cap. 21, p. 720.

he was tracked to his asylum, bound, and brought secretly captive to Rome, where he was consigned to the dungeons of St. Angelo, whilst his funeral pyre was erected at night in front of the Porta del Popolo. At the earliest dawn of light, before Rome was awakened from her slumbers, the indomitable soul of the first great champion of her liberties winged its flight above, parting with life in the earthly torments and ignominy which have almost always marked the end of pure and great prophetic spirits. The ashes of Arnaldo were flung into the Tiber by the hand of the executioner, as a further mark of a shameful and hopeless end.

The martyrdom of Arnaldo did not at first subdue the pretensions of the Roman Senate. Informed of the approach of Frederick, it deputed a messenger to invite him to the city, under certain peculiar conditions. The quaint and pompous character of the letter marks the taste of the period.

“Rome, having shaken off its priestly yoke, is ready honourably to receive her Emperor, if he be animated by the desire for peace. May the Eternal City through thy influence¹ recover its ancient splendours, and revive the image of those times, wherein the wisdom of the Senate and the valour of the equestrian order had reached a degree of fame commanding the eastern and western hemispheres of the world. We have revived the institution of the Senate and the Equestrian Order, for the purpose of aiding thee in counsel, and in order to forward thy service and that of the Empire. Hearken thou to the words of the world's Queen.

“Thou wert a stranger² and I made thee a citizen. I went to seek thee in far countries beyond the Alps, in order to proclaim thy Imperial might. Thy first duty,

¹ According to the formulæ (in writing) of mediæval times, the plural number was used in addressing a high or superior personage in token of respect. The singular, “thou,” was considered as denoting terms of superiority or equality. The Pontiff was in the habit of thus addressing sovereigns, whilst they never used the same terms.

² “*Hospes eras, civem feci, advena fuisti ex transalpinis partibus, principem constitui.*” Ott. Frising. p. 721.

ere entering Rome, is to swear to the *observance of our laws*, and the maintenance of our privileges, and to bind thyself, on oath, to defend *our liberties* from all barbaric inroads, even at the risk of thy life. Moreover, the sum of five thousand silver livres are to be paid by thee to the officials who shall proclaim thy title in the Roman capitol."¹

At this stipulation for mercenary retribution (the *mancie*) we cannot be surprised if the Emperor interrupted the orator with scanty courtesy. In violent wrath he made a very apposite answer: "I had heard of the vaunted wisdom and greatness of the Romans, but thy words indicate rather the expression of an arrogant folly, than the knowledge of the present situation of Rome.

"Subject to the vicissitudes of fortune, thy city now *obeys*, where once she *commanded*. From Germany must now be sought the renewal of the glories of the capital, together with the valour of its warriors and the wisdom of the Senate. It was Charlemagne and Otho the Great who drove the Longobards, Greeks, and other tyrants from Italy. I, as their successor, am the legitimate Prince and Sovereign Lord of the Romans."²

"Do ye think the arm of the Germans has lost its pristine force? Who dares to wrench the club from the grasp of Hercules? If any such there be, my brave warriors would give them cause to repent. Thou pretendest to impose on me the respect of your laws, customs and privileges, to 'render justice,' and above all to pay a 'tributary contribution,' as though I were a prisoner on ransom to the Senate. Learn that it is a sovereign office to dictate laws and not to receive precepts."³ With regard to the administration of justice, I shall follow the dictates of my heart. As to my bounty, although it be bestowed with generosity, I shall never suffer its measure to be meted out."

¹ Otto. Frising. p. 721. "The Chronicle of the Slaves" substitutes *fifteen* thousand livres for five thousand (ii. e. 79).

² "Legitimus possessor sum." Otto. Frising. p. 722.

³ Principem populo, non populum principi leges præscribere oportet. Otto. Frising. p. 772.

The message and the answer are both admirably characteristic of the age. But the Senate and people of Rome were more spirited than their ridiculous harangue might have led one to suppose ; and as they persisted in refusing to admit Frederick inside their gates, it was necessary to procure his clandestine entrance into the Leonine city. The prefect then under the Pontifical rule privately admitted a thousand men-at-arms by a postern gate at night, and on the following day Adrian IV. and his clergy received Frederick, " King of the Romans," in state on the high balcony of St. Peter's, in which church the Imperial crown was bestowed on him, June 18, 1155, whilst the bell of the capitol tolled to call the inhabitants to arms by command of the Senate.

A wild rush followed on the barrier of the bridge of Saint Angelo, which separated Republican from Papal Rome. All obstacles were overthrown ; such of the Imperialists as remained in the city were overpowered. The property of the cardinals was mercilessly sacked, and the Pope himself would not have escaped outrage had he not with his party effected a timely retreat. An engagement followed, however, at the gates of Rome, between the Imperial troops, led by Frederick in person, and the Romans, in which the latter were defeated, and above a thousand were slain. " This," exultingly writes the Imperial chronicler, " is the coin with which the Emperor repays the Romans for the price which they insolently set on his crown."

Notwithstanding this victory, the Pope did not venture to return within Rome, and the want of provisions compelled Frederick to retire on Tivoli, with the intention of fulfilling his promise of relieving the southern provinces from the tyranny of William the Bad. But a violent dysentery broke out amongst his troops, and he was compelled to make a hurried march back to Germany, not without, however, leaving bloody traces of his passage at Spoleto, and of his vengeance in the northern provinces, where he caused all captives found in arms against him to be hanged or mutilated.

The end of the first expedition of Frederick in Italy raised, on the whole, the hopes of his opponents; for though he had been "crowned" at Rome, and had given the Republicans a severe defeat, yet he had neither effected an entrance into the city nor had he chastised (as he had threatened) the revolt of Milan; and he had, on the contrary, exasperated popular hatred by the severity of his executions. The Guelph party was thus considerably increased in numbers and strengthened in purpose.

It is probable that, having accomplished his aim of being crowned at Rome, and having so signally chastised the Republican party, Frederick was not averse to returning to his faithful and admiring subjects north of the Alps, in all the glory of his new dignity, and with a certain prestige of military glory. But whether compelled by pestilence, or whether urged by fickleness, his retreat had unforeseen consequences highly adverse to his cause; for the Pope, who, being unable to return to Rome, had sought refuge at Benevento (then at war with William the Bad), was compelled to enter into terms with the latter; and, with the strange fortune which had marked all the dealings of the Normans with the Pontifical See, had been obliged to submit to the hard and unjust conditions of that wicked Sovereign. The insurgents of Benevento were forsaken by the Pontiff; their lives were endangered, their property confiscated, and their fortresses were destroyed; but Adrian IV. and William the Bad were declared fast friends and allies.

Frederick affected to express deep resentment at this new alliance, omitting to consider how far his own failure in fulfilling his engagements had contributed to forward it; and in this embittered state of feeling between the Papal and Imperial parties a circumstance which soon arose fanned the flame into open fire.

Frederick had been first married to Adelaide de Voburg, but the union had never been sanctioned or acknowledged by Rome, on the plea of too close kinsmanship between the parties concerned. He now put away Adelaide, and espoused Beatrice, daughter and heiress of

Rainaldo, Count Palatine of Upper Burgundy or Franche Comte.¹ Although the first marriage had never been allowed to be valid by the Pope, yet, on the occasion of this second alliance, he seized the excuse to excommunicate the Emperor. About this time, some rude and overbearing German nobles also maltreated a high dignitary of the Church; and at the Imperial Diet, held at Besancon, two cardinals appeared as envoys from Rome, under colour of exacting reparation for this affront, but from their haughty and offensive language evidently intending to provoke and wound Frederick. The message was designedly conveyed in terms the most irritating: "Forget not that it is thy Mother, the Holy Church, who has raised thee to the pinnacle of honours, by *conferring* on thee, with the most exalted generosity, the highest of *benefits*, the Imperial crown."²

These insolent and premeditated affronts, lowering the majesty of the Empire to a mere apostolic fief, aroused alike the indignation of the German ecclesiastics and laity. The assembly rose as one man, and the Archbishop of Cologne demanded the retraction of the offensive words.

"And from whom else save the Lord Pope," demanded the Cardinal Orlando, one of the legates, "did the King receive the Empire?" At this, the Count Palatine of the Empire, who bore the sword of state, was on the point of striking the legate. Frederick alone preserved his self-command, and bade the legates depart from his territories as quickly as they could. An answer to the insolent speech of the Pope's messengers was prepared and delivered to the German and Italian clergy.

"Whosoever shall dare to maintain that we have received the Imperial crown as a 'benefice' from the

¹ This province had been comprised in the donation of Rodolph, King of Burgundy, to the Salic Conrad, 1032, since which time it had been incorporated in the Empire of Germany.

² *Insigne videlicet coronæ beneficium tibi continuamus* (Epist. Adrian IV. ap. Labbaeum Concil. T. x. n. 2.) "Beneficium" in feudal language signified a feudal tenure; "conferre" signifies "to invest"—the act by which the feudal tenure is conferred.

Sovereign Pontiff will be guilty of uttering a falsehood, as well contrary to the Divine law, as it is to the doctrines of the Church. For ourselves, rather than suffer such opprobrium, we are willing, if need be, to suffer death."¹

Adrian IV., on his part, issued a letter to the episcopal clergy, complaining bitterly of the insults his legates had met at the Diet of Besançon.

"Be ye as a strong wall of defence of the house of the Lord." "Endeavour to bring back a stray son to the bosom of the Church."²

He demands, moreover, that satisfaction should be offered by the Count Palatine and the Archbishop of Cologne for their unseemly conduct.

The German clergy to a man sided with the Emperor, and condemned, as exaggerated, the pretensions of Rome.

To avenge the "national honour" another expedition to Italy was determined on, and the great vassals of the Empire and Frederick declared themselves ready to take part in it.

Adrian, perceiving he had gone too far, and that his insolent, aggressive measures had aroused a determined hostility which mocked his spiritual thunders, endeavoured to soothe the resentment of Frederick by softening or explaining away the terms which had given so much just offence to the German independence of feeling; but it was too late. The Imperial army left Ulna, in June, 1158, and, separating in various corps, met on the plains of Lombardy, where it was joined by the Guelph Lombards, and by the contingents from Tuscany and Romagna, forming a mass of 15,000 *milites*. The calculation of three sergeants-at-arms (*i.e.* three horsemen) for every warrior at arms makes this represent 45,000 cavalry. The infantry, which was then a force greatly underrated, is called "*innumerable*," and with this

¹ Radevic. Frising. p. 748. Cherrier, Histoire de la Lutte des Papes et des Empereurs, Vol. i., liv. 1, p. 116.

² Labbæi Concil., T. x., n. 3, p. 1145.

mighty army Frederick sat down before Milan.¹ The territories adjacent to the city were first devastated, to compel it to surrender by famine.

The attack commenced August 6, 1158. Milan was an exceedingly powerful and well-fortified city; the ditch surrounding it was supplied by an ample current of flowing water. The inhabitants were bent upon asserting their liberty with the most steadfast courage. It was the very soul of the anti-Imperial League, and Frederick, recollecting the contumely with which the citizens had treated him when he passed it by on his way to Rome, was wise in first striking at it.

After five weeks' hard fighting, and after seeing their unharvested corn trampled under foot, their vines and fruit-trees burnt, their neighbouring villages plundered and razed, the Milanese were compelled to sue for terms; less out of fear of want, than because of the joining of many of the Guelph cities, whom they had oppressed, to the Emperor. The municipality accordingly entreated Frederick's clemency, and proposed a cessation of hostilities.

The Emperor showed himself more placable than was anticipated from a man of his fiery passions and unsubdued pride.

The city was allowed to maintain its municipal institutions, the magistrates to be chosen by free election. The male population, between the ages of fourteen and seventy, were to take the oath of fealty to the Emperor; the oath to be renewed so often as new magistrates or consuls were elected. The dignities of the latter were to be confirmed by the Emperor. They were to give up their right of "regalia," and were to set their prisoners of war free without ransom. They engaged to pay at various intervals nine thousand silver marks within the year, and three hundred hostages, drawn from the flower of the nobility and burgesses, were to be the pledge of the fulfilment of these terms.²

The Emperor at the same time granted an amnesty to

¹ Sire Raul, p. 1180. Otto. Morena, p. 1007.

² "Venturi vero Consules a populo eligantur." Radevic. Frising. p. 779.

the rebellious Guelphs, and promised to prevent the entrance of his troops within the city, thus warding off pillage and destruction from it.

The 8th of September was named for the tendering of the oaths, and Frederick, with the policy which he always showed when his passions did not (as they at a later period did) overrule his great abilities, commanded that the ceremony should be conducted with far more than usual publicity and splendour.

For this purpose a grand pavilion was erected, and a splendid throne raised, some four miles from Milan, on the road to Lodi. The Emperor and the Empress, surrounded by all their nobles, in their most magnificent costumes, there awaited the Milanese burgesses. The Emperor and the Empress wore their crowns and Imperial robes, and were attended by the high state officers of the Empire; crowds of the inhabitants of the neighbouring towns gathered to behold the humiliation of their oppressive rival, Milan. The road was kept by a double file of men-at-arms, behind whom the multitudes pressed; the line extending from the pavilion to the gates of the city. Amidst solemn peals of bells the sad procession issued from Porta Romana. The clergy bearing the cross, crosier, and the sacred relics, came first; after them, the consuls, magistrates, nobles, freemen, and notabilities of the place, in worn apparel, bare-headed and bare-footed, holding small wooden crosses, in token of penitence—for in that early age every feeling had its material and dramatic symbol, to overawe the ignorant and impress the multitude.

In this guise the oaths of fealty and of obedience to Frederick, as "King of Italy," were taken, with all the sincerity usual in homage from the vanquished to the victor.

From Milan the Emperor went to Monza to receive the iron crown of Italy; and in the following November a diet was held at Roncaglia, where, for the moment, his triumph seemed complete. To account for the apparently servile readiness of the Italian communes in

tendering the oaths of allegiance, we must bear in mind the force of long ages of traditionary recognition of the "Imperial Suzerainty," and the fact, never to be lost sight of in mediæval history, that the mutual envies, aggressions, cruelty, and savage inhumanity the communes exercised one to another disposed many of the highest citizens to acknowledge, nominally a superior lord who would in some degree protect them from such conduct as Milan had shown towards Lodi, and certainly would have inflicted on Pavia, if the opportunity occurred. Every city then believed the destruction, by any means whatsoever, of a rival city was an act of *lawful* and *commendable* municipal virtue and vigour; and with life, honour, and property at the mercy of passions such as these raging but a few miles asunder—without even alluding to the private deeds of atrocious violence and revenge which darken the annals of Italy during the wars of the communes—we cannot feel surprised if the latter embraced eagerly the chance of protection and of tranquillity. Except in the case of Tortona (which was severely treated as a warning) the power of Frederick had, as yet, not been harshly exercised in Lombardy; on the contrary, his magnanimity in saving so wealthy a city as Milan from the rapacity of his innumerable hosts deserved gratitude and respect from those communes, who could not but reflect on the different measure Milan (although rebellious to Cæsar) would have dealt to them if rebellious to Milan.

The fact, unobserved, but which five hundred and more years has confirmed, was even then notable, that, when power was in their own hands, the insupportable maltreatment by the Italians of their fellow-countrymen has invariably made a large party in the Peninsula thankful to appeal to the "stranger," to secure to them the rights of life and of property.

At the Diet of Roncaglia, it is certain that Frederick showed no desire to conceal in any obscurity his rights or his assertions of prerogatives. Passing aside the usual gross flatteries of mere courtiers as unworthy of

notice, he commanded two judges from every commune in Italy* to attend the assembly; the chief jurists in Italy, and, in particular, four of the greatest legists of the celebrated University of Bologna, were charged with a compilation of the Imperial prerogatives, including many which had fallen into disuse for a century.

Since the discovery of a copy of the Pandects of Justinian,¹ a rapturous admiration and revival of the prestige exercised over the mind of the populations of old by the prerogatives of the great Roman Empire had been renewed: it had become the fashion to compare the greatness of the German Emperors to the Cæsars of old, to whom the mastery of the world was attributed. And Frederick, intoxicated with success, persuaded himself (as many other mortals have since done) that the supremacy of the world was really reserved for him. We are told by Otton Morena² (an historian of the time) that, during a ride with two celebrated legists of Bologna, Frederick, addressing them, demanded if they really considered him to be the "rightful owner of the earth?"

"Not as regards its real and actual property," timidly answered one. "Yes, in regard even to its *real and actual property*," more adroitly replied the other; and, on his return home, his complaisance was rewarded by a gift of the horse he had been mounted on.

The Emperor opened the Diet of Roncaglia with an oration in German, as he was but imperfectly acquainted with Latin and Italian; and made the customary formal professions of intending to reign "with justice and humanity, and to respect the liberties of the communes, so far as they did not trench upon Imperial prerogatives;" then, after a semblance of deliberation amongst the Italian clergy and delegates, the following terms were agreed on:—

The Italians surrendered, under the title of "Regalia,"

¹ This copy of the Pandects, now in the Laurentian Library at Florence, was discovered at Amalfi, by the Pisans, in the year 1137, a little more than twenty years before the Diet of Roncaglia, and Bologna instantly adopted the enthusiastic study of them.

² Otton. Morena. Hist., p. 1018.

the investiture of all "Feodi" or feudal tenures, all passage dues over rivers, fords, and roads; the right of coining money, of "foderum," or provisions for the militia on passage through, or resident in, Italy. The poll tax (testatico) and custom-house dues were all unequivocally surrendered to the Emperor.

The Archbishop of Milan placed the seal of his authority on the transaction by taking on himself to answer the Emperor's speech in a harangue full of deference, of which the chief argument seems to be as follows:—"Know, therefore, illustrious Prince, that the right of forming and of giving laws belongs exclusively to yourself, whose will is alone the supreme law of all." ¹

The remarkable surrender of the rights of tolls over fords, roads, and rivers is easily understood, if we reflect on the arbitrary manner in which the levying of these was conducted, and the oppressions every commune and every feudal noble could exercise against a rival, or against merely ordinary companies of merchants; and the same considerations hold good as to the coining of money, the distracting confusion of so many different coinages having greatly retarded the development of the resources of the Peninsula, even to our own day. But it is easy to foresee the consequences of unlimited power in the hands of one man, and the abuses which followed this surrender of every liberty. This state, in fact, soon proved so intolerable that the subsequent rebellion of Lombardy follows, as the natural fruit of the Diet of Roncaglia.

The desire for *independence* had not, in Northern Italy, passed with the smoke of Arnaldo's funeral pyre, as it did in Rome. We shall soon see a nobler and a manlier spirit arise; a spirit which was unquenched in future ages, and which survives to the present day; but at that moment the Emperor seemed to have been gratified by full earthly success and glory.

The appointment of the chief magistrates had been

¹ Tua voluntas jus est. Radec. Frising. p. 586.

legally granted to the Emperor; and, by the wise counsels of the legists of Bologna, the Podestà, or supreme magistrate of every commune, was chosen from some "stranger," or even "foreign" city or country; this choice was to be ratified by the people. Bologna had given the initiative in this remarkable and judicious custom. She had been governed by municipal rectors, triennially chosen by the people, but all foreigners.¹

This measure, in itself so excellent, and afterwards universally adopted, was, however, at that crisis so hostile to municipal feelings (and made the pretext for so many offensive appointments) that it was one of the causes of the rapid rise of feelings of revolt against the Empire.

But a more grievous breach upon liberty followed the nomination of the foreign Podestàs. We have shown the "right of alliance," hitherto exercised as a matter of natural right, between cities and communes, and the great feudal nobles, for mutual defence, or for combined aggression.

This right was now absolutely vested in the Emperor, with whom the question of war and of peace against city or nobleman was henceforth to rest; and a ruinous fine of one hundred gold lire was imposed on the town or the individual who should break it. We cannot but smile in the year 1876, when our ideas of national policy and of patriotism are so different from those of the twelfth century, at the uncontrollable wrath of the nobles and communes, at being thus compelled to live at peace. No modern practice or theory of liberty, no privilege of dearest value to the citizen, can surpass the persuasion of imprescriptible right, held in 1155 as the sacred liberty of every man, "to make war upon his neighbour."

Marquises, counts, chiefs, or captains who attempted to break the law were to pay half the above enormous fine. Vavasours were amerced at twenty lire.

All armed assemblies, all private confederacies between the great feudatories, or between these and the cities

¹ Savioli, Storia di Bologna.

were prohibited; and every freeman breaking the peace was liable to be fined a golden lira.

The city of Milan (the aggressive nature of which we have already seen) felt this humiliation, of course, with intense bitterness, and took an immediate occasion to rebel against it. The nomination of a foreign Podestà afforded a natural opportunity for a tumult; and the Archbishop of Cologne and the Count Palatine of the Empire, who acted as the representatives of Frederick at the ceremony of the appointment of the new magistrate, were fiercely attacked, and owed their lives to a precipitate retreat. Summoned to answer for this act, the city refused to send any delegates to apologize or to explain it; and Milan was in consequence placed under the "ban of the Empire."

This was, at that date, by no means a mere formal sentence; for the city which had fallen under it lost every single right and privilege, and passed suddenly under all the penalties which, in the Middle Ages, attended private persons under the sentence of "outlawry;" and the very walls and houses of the town were doomed, under such circumstances (when falling under the power of the victor), to be destroyed by fire and by the pickaxe.¹

The arguments on which the tumult was assumed to be grounded were these. By the capitulation of 1158, the Milanese were entitled to the election of their own city rectors; but to this it was answered that, having taken the "oath of obedience," they were bound to submit to the new laws. To which they counter-answered, "that it was true they had taken the oath, *but not the oath to observe it*"² A curious trait, and a highly characteristic one, of the value of oaths at that time.

Disregarding the Imperial sentence of condemnation, the Milanese proceeded to the assault of the Castle of Trezzo, occupied by the Imperialists.

The Italians they found within, when they took it,

¹ 3 Maii, 1159, Radevic Frising. p. 803.

² Juravimus quidem sed non juramentum attendere promissimus. Radevic. Frising. p. 807.

they hanged; and the two hundred Germans they led away in chains. The castle itself was utterly destroyed.

Frederick now resolved on the systematic and complete subjection of the obstinate and haughty rebellious city, and on such a punishment as should deter other cities from following her example.

The commencement of his work of vengeance was the intercepting of all supplies of provisions to the city from the great Ghibelline communes, and particularly from its own allies, Crema, Brescia, and Piacenza, whilst he caused the district or *contado* of Milan to be devastated by his remaining soldiers, and invited once more his feudal followers to cross the Alps.

Meanwhile, all the questions of dissension between the Emperor and the Pope were becoming more embittered. Adrian obstinately refused to acknowledge the second marriage of the Emperor, and the latter complained angrily of the alliance of the Pope with William the Bad, King of Sicily.

The revenues of the vast estates of the great Countess Matilda afforded another cause for hostility. These had been, we remember, expressly granted to Lothair, and Frederick had ceded them to his maternal uncle, Duke Welf, in compensation for the Dukedom of Bavaria (of which the Empress Elizabeth was the heiress).

On this, there had been an angry correspondence between the chiefs of the Empire and the Church, in the course of which Frederick had addressed some just but uncalled-for advice to Adrian "to conform more to both letter and spirit of Christianity."

Two letters attributed to the hostile parties are preserved, and show that, even so early as the twelfth century, a possibility of Germany detaching herself from the yoke of Rome was contemplated. The two letters are addressed to the Archbishop of Treviso.¹ The letter which is ascribed to Frederick runs thus :—

¹ These curious letters, mentioned also in Cherrier "Histoire de la Lutte entre les Papes et les Empereurs," formed part of a MS.

“Divine service in Rome is performed in the most scandalous manner; the habitation of Peter is turned into a den of thieves—into the sojourn of the spirit of darkness; wherein the Pope, renewing the work of Simon, sells holy things for lucre. How shall we be in awe of excommunication, when his own folks set him at naught? Have you not yourself heard the Romans deride us because we maintain ourselves submissive to his authority? In presence of the Roman Church converted into a lottery prize, sold and given over to the Egyptians, we turn to yourself as the chief primate beyond the Alps, and who art keeper of our Lord’s tunic garment without seam,¹ inviting you to wrench the house of God from the hands of the ‘Apostle’” (the title then given to the Pope), “whom we shall chase forth from the fold as a thief who secretly introduced himself amongst the flock. We address ourselves to you as president over a second Rome; to you, on whom Peter, with the pastoral ring and staff, has confided the power and might he himself received from Christ, in order that, after himself, you might be the first in authority over the Church (as Peter was the first after his divine Master); to you we confide the government of the Church, in virtue of our Imperial authority, to govern it in St. Peter’s name. Then shall it not be necessary for the high ecclesiastical authorities and prelates of our Transalpine realm to seek counsel at Viterbo, that bastard of Rome.² Then may we hope to obtain verdicts founded on a sense of rectitude and justice, not prompted by the sordid spirit of the Roman Court, where the

collection made in the thirteenth century in the Convent of Neider Altreich, which now belongs to the Strasburg Library. Other less ancient MSS. in the Abbey of Hablo contain the identical documents. Goldast. Const. Imper. publishes the first of these letters. Hahn. Collect. Man. produces the third, dated 9th March, 1159, attributed to the Pope.

¹ Commonly known as “The Holy Coat of Trêves.” It is not known how it reached that city. It was preserved in an ancient altar-piece, under the patronage of St. Nicholas; it was afterwards removed to that of St. Peter, and displayed to the populace in 1196.

² *Ut omnes de regno nostro cis-alpes non Bitervi, ad novam Romam sed Trevisi ad secundam Romam veniant.* This alludes to the fact that Adrian IV. had inhabited Viterbo before the coronation of Frederick I.

Apostolic has been superseded by the *mercantile* spirit of action.

“As the first amongst the metropolitan primates, the *Apostolic* dignity reverts in right to yourself. Accept it, then, without reticence; make common cause with the Bishops of Metz, Toul, and Verdun (and united to ourselves and Germany) against the *son of Belial* who falsely entitles himself the *Vicar of Christ*.”

There are two other letters, but less important in character. In the one the Archbishop of Treviso informs the Holy Father (under great reserve) of the Emperor's displeasure, and endeavours to conciliate the two adversaries. On the part of Adrian, his wrath breaks forth in equally violent invectives against the prince who pretends to equal Christ's Vicar in power. He compares him to the “Dragon in the Apocalypse,” and, making him also guilty of the bloodshed spilt in Rome at his coronation, he accuses him of instigating the odium of the Romans against the Holy See. The language of the Pope is as characteristic as that ascribed to Frederick.

“This prince, who, like a ravenous wolf, seems bound on the destruction of the Lord's vineyard, dares to compare himself to us, as though our authority, instead of extending itself over the world, were; like his, circumscribed to Germany. Did not this same country rank as last amongst kingdoms, when, through special grace of the Holy See, it was raised to the first rank? Hearken, and mark these words. Yours was simply a ‘king’ before he received the crown from our hands, and became an ‘emperor.’ It is through our virtue¹ that he exercises the Imperial power. Aix-la-Chapelle, in the Forest of Ardennes, is his capital; Rome is ours. Now, inasmuch as Rome is superior to Aix-la-Chapelle, so far do we surpass him in greatness. God has raised us to a rank above all men, and above all kingdoms, giving us the power of planting and uprooting at our will.”²

These interesting and invaluable documents come down

¹ “Unde igitur habet imperium nisi a nobis?” Epis. Hillini.

² Lateran. 19, mart. 1159. Hillini Collect. monum. T. 1, p. 122.

to us from sources beyond dispute, from the archives of great monasteries, in close intercourse with the Roman Court.

In July, 1159, Frederick had been reinforced by a strong army from Germany, and laid siege to Crema, an ally of Milan, and as such peculiarly obnoxious to Cremona and other cities which sided with the Empire. Crema held out for seven months, and was only subdued by famine. Frederick, exasperated by the defence, had caused forty hostages, six Milanese gentlemen, and many prisoners to be hanged before the walls; and as the Cremese retaliated with like bloody reprisals, he caused the young children who were sent out of the walls (to save food) to be bound in front of the battering rams and towers driven against the city walls, and these were met by the heavy stones sent out by the besieged, who thus unconsciously crushed their own offspring.

When the heroic city surrendered, the inhabitants' lives were indeed spared, but it was delivered over to the rival town of Cremona, which burned it to the ground, after utterly sacking it.

Ere the beautiful city of Milan met the same dreadful fate, a still deeper breach was to widen between the Emperor and the Pope, and to act powerfully on the future destinies of Italy.

Adrian IV., who expired September, 1159, had leagued with Milan, Piacenza, and Brescia against the Emperor and the Ghibelline cities. Each member of the league had sworn neither to make peace nor truce without the consent of its allies. A new complication ensued at the death of the Pope, for the Senate of Rome made an act of adherence to the Emperor.

Two parties were consequently formed in the conclave, and the College of Cardinals divided their votes between rival candidates—the one, a native of Siena, subsequently well known as Alexander III., the other a Roman, who took the title of Victor III., and from the first sided with the Emperor, and warmly espoused his cause.

France, England, Sicily, Arragon, Hungary, and Jerusalem, together with most of the Lombard communes, on the other hand, all acknowledged Alexander. This renewed division in the Church itself added fuel to fire, and Alexander, to bring his strength to a fair test, on learning that the Council of Pavia had ratified the choice of his rival for the See of Saint Peter, launched forth an excommunication against Frederick of Swabia from the pulpit of the Cathedral of Anagni (where he then resided) after the performance of Divine service. After pointing to his special misdemeanours towards the Papal See, he brought forward the still unpunished death of the Swedish prelate (the pretext for the first quarrel between Frederick and Adrian), and his own wrongs, at the Diet of Besançon.¹

He wound up his oration by excommunicating the "Imperial tyrant," "Octavian," the "false pope," and "Otho, Count Palatine," as well as all their adherents indiscriminately, "giving them over to the devil, in order that their flesh might perish, and their souls be saved."²

When we recollect the enormously preponderating party in the Western World which had always acknowledged Alexander III., we are not surprised to hear of the deep impression this anathema, hurled at the head of a dreaded and rival prince, caused in the rest of Europe, and how eagerly it was welcomed and published.

About the same time, Frederick, who, for want of the necessary warlike engines, or, as we should now say in a parallel case, siege artillery, had been compelled to postpone the siege of Milan, was joined by a fresh and powerful force from Germany, and prepared to keep his angry vow: "Not to place crown on head" until he should have reduced the Milanese rebels to dust and ashes. To the German armies gladly flocked also the feudal contingents of the cities of Lodi, Pavia, and Cremona, the rivals

¹ Alexander III. was one of the two Papal legates on that occasion, and had been most zealous in defence of Rome.

² Ep. Alexander III. (11 non. April) ap. Labbaeum, p. 1362.

of Milan, hating and hated, and rejoicing to return persecution. This disposition to envy and oppression amongst the Italian cities must be ever borne foremost in the mind; it explains, indeed, the whole question of the "Imperial Suzerainty" in Italy. For the whole "*military power*" of the Emperor, dependent, as it was, on mere feudal engagements, limited as to time, was like a wave of the sea that washes over a shore, destructive, indeed, but soon retiring.

The rivalry of Milan and Cremona was intelligible, for the latter city, from her happy position upon two great navigable rivers, was a dangerous competitor to Milan, and this rivalry continued for more than three hundred years afterwards, to the middle of the fifteenth century, when Cremona was taken and sacked by Francesco Sforza (di Attendolo), with a perverse and horrid barbarity (at the instigation of Milan), which renders this siege, like that of Magdeburgh by Tilly, two hundred years afterwards, memorable even in those evil times.

The Milanese made a most skilful and determined defence, and effected several desperate and gallant sorties, in one of which Frederick himself was unhorsed. The vindictive Emperor, on this, caused twelve captives to be cruelly mutilated; six were deprived of sight, and six others were blinded of one eye and had the nose cut off, and in this deplorable condition they were sent back to Milan.¹

Famine now reigned in all its gaunt horror in the city. The public granaries had been burnt in the beginning of winter; the Imperial force and the hostility of the rich communes of Lodi, Pavia, and Cremona forbade all hopes of supplies; and, in spite of the prayers of the magistrates and upper classes, the great mass of the populace, in hopeless despair, insisted on a surrender without terms. At this juncture twenty delegates of the people went to Frederick from the unfortunate city, threw themselves at his feet, and implored for mercy. Three days after, the

¹ Chron. de Reb. in Ital. gestis. (MSS. in the British Museum.) Printed by Huillard-de-Breholles, p. 122.

entire body of consular authorities, and three hundred knights, bearing the keys of the city, presented themselves silently to the Emperor. They also brought the thirty-six banners of the town, and last of all the carroccio, called "Lo Stendardo," which bore the great flag of Milan, and represented the life, honour, and existence of the place.

We remember how Frederick had once spared Milan, under circumstances of great provocation; and spared her, indeed, so much that his Lombard partisans were displeased, and asked where was the good of being faithful, when rebellion was so leniently dealt with? We have also seen how Milan had treated her sister Lodi, and we know how she meditated to destroy Cremona. But by that singular process of human reasoning by which we consider ourselves to be entitled to an exemption from all the penalties and sufferings we inflict upon others, the Milanese displayed a frantic agony of despair and desolation, at the idea of being called upon to suffer from the fortunes of war, such as rarely has been equalled, and which is remarked upon by all the chroniclers of the period.

Frederick first of all caused three thousand of the most considerable inhabitants of the place to be given into his hands; he then ordered the walls and towers of the city to be levelled to the ordinary height of the common dwelling-houses of the people, and the gates to be almost demolished for the entrance of his army. These ravages on the state and glory of the town he caused to be made by the very hands of the inhabitants.

To ward off the final destruction of their beloved city, a deputation of citizens, in an incredible agony of desolation, in torn garments and holding wooden crosses, sought the presence of Frederick outside the city. The Emperor, anticipating the appeal, and fearing lest the gentle and forgiving nature of the Empress should interpose in behalf of the suppliants, had commanded her to be withdrawn to a distance; and the unhappy burghers, who had relied on the tenderness of her heart to inter-

cede for them, tried, but in vain, to attract her attention by throwing their poor wooden crosses in the direction of her presumed abode.

These crosses were but the visible signs of their own unutterable woe; and even the men of war, and the Empress's female train, were moved to tears by the sight of so much misery. The chronicler adds: "Not an eye was dry, save that of the Emperor Frederick, who sat silent and unmoved in presence of the pitiful sight."

Frederick must not, however, be wholly and unreservedly blamed. He was well used to the hollowness of these exhibitions; he knew that the Milanese were at that moment leagued with Alexander III. for his utter ruin; he had already experienced their complete faithlessness; and the Italian Ghibellines eagerly pressed for their undoubted and, in that age, unquestionable right, to pillage the fallen town.

The language of the Ghibelline communes merits record, as it speaks, far better than any comment, the *bonâ fide* feelings and ideas of the times. What the victorious Ghibelline demanded as "a right" over the fallen Guelph, the triumphant Guelph, in his turn, exercised over the Ghibelline. "The city has fallen into the victor's hand," they said, "thus affording him an opportunity to reward his friends and adherents *by right of pillage*. Had his patience not yet been sufficiently tried? Was fresh war constantly to be incurred, whilst these pestilent rebels held possession of their soil?"

The Emperor still paused another month ere the final doom of Milan was decreed. Some writers, amongst others Sire Raul, affirm that Ghibelline bribes, and great sums of gold distributed in the Court, hastened the decision; but the sentence is celebrated even now—Milan was ordered to be destroyed.

With shrieks and tears, the wretched population poured forth, age, infirmity, sickness, infancy, all desolate and all unsheltered, whilst the foe exultingly marched in. The troops of the Ghibelline cities, Cremona, Pavia, Lodi, Como, Novara, Seprio, and Martesana, with lighted

torches and pickaxes, divided the town into quarters; they first plundered these systematically, and then burnt and demolished the houses—an easy task at that period, when timber and reeds formed the materials of most of the common abodes in upper Italy. Only three churches were spared—Santa Maria, San Maurizio, and Santo Ambrogio, where the kings of Italy were crowned.

According to a common belief of the time, that salt created an acidity for ever in soil—a notion erroneously derived from the East—salt was flung amongst the ashes, with a malediction which pronounced the spot to be henceforth a desert.

The inhabitants were parcelled out amongst the rest of the Italian towns and villages, and were forbidden to return even to their ruins. Then fell on these outcasts all the torments and persecutions they had inflicted on Lodi, and had longed to inflict upon Pavia and Cremona. Most of the Italian cities submitted nominally to Frederick after this awful example. Piacenza and Brescia were amerced at six thousand lire. The King of Sicily began to tremble for his realm, and Alexander III. fled for refuge to the Court of Louis VII.

Frederick, meantime, held a plenary Court at Pavia, where the great Ghibelline nobles surrounded him with congratulations and festivities.

Happily for Italy, all the Imperial successes were but as the labours of the fabled Sisyphus; the very constitution of the Empire forbade all permanent fruits of victory beyond the Alps. To garrison the Peninsula was impracticable, and allegiance depended solely on voluntary good-will.

The new regulations for the naming of the foreign Podestàs, and for “keeping peace,” were offensive in the highest degree to the Lombards; and we may be sure the Imperial vicars and rectors were not the most conciliating of their order; added to which, universal wrongs were complained of, and private feelings of deep compassion at the misery of Milan were felt throughout the Guelph towns. At this juncture Victor III., the anti-pope,

died (22nd of April, 1164). Contemporary chronicles dwell with satisfaction on his prospects in the next world. "He went to hell an unpenitent and excommunicated sinner."¹

Instead of urging on Frederick a reconciliation with Alexander III., acknowledged as Pontiff by the greater part of the Latin Church, the Ghibelline party now absolutely insisted upon his supporting another anti-pope whom they caused to be elected under the name of Pascal III., declaring that, after his death, they would accept of no Pope save such as might be created by the Emperor; and it was decided that any future king of the Romans should, as a primary condition, subscribe to these terms before receiving the German crown.

Nobles, common men, ecclesiastics were all subjected to this oath. The Archbishops of Mayence and Salzburg, who utterly refused it, were ejected from their sees, and expelled from their feudal tenures.

At Aix-la-Chapelle Frederick held a plenary Court; and amidst much festivity, and with many solemn church services, the tomb of Charlemagne, who had been *canonised* by Victor III., at the request of the Emperor, was opened, and several of his bones were withdrawn, to serve as relics for the veneration of Frederick.² The rest of the revered body, after having been exhibited to the devotion of the people, was restored to its tomb below the Church of the Holy Virgin. Three hundred and fifty years had elapsed since it was first placed there, and there it still remains.

Whilst Frederick was enjoying his triumphs in his own land, Alexander III. had made his equally triumphant entry into Rome. His Vicar had prudently and mildly prepared it, by smoothing away all hostilities.

¹ Vita Alex. III., p. 455.

² See the diploma of Frederick in Bollandus; also Godf. (olon. ad ann. 1166), T. ii. of January, p. 888. An arm of this uncanonical, saint was withdrawn by Frederick Barbarossa during the exhumation and placed in a splendid reliquary, to be seen at present in the Louvre. Besides the enamelled portraits of Frederick's ancestors, the inner side of the lid has the following inscription: "Brachium est gloriosissimi Imperatoris Karoli."

This great national event took place on the twenty-third of November, 1166. The tables of fortune were now about to turn, raising the Guelph, and depressing the Ghibelline interests throughout Italy. Alexander had never ceased from an ardent interest in, and communication with, the Guelph cities and communes of Italy; and he now urged them on, by all the force of spiritual approbation, in their preparations of defence against Frederick, who was gathering his forces for a sixth descent upon Italy, which he effected the following year, November, 1167.

But, for the first time in Italian history, a really national spirit may be said to have been roused by the unpopularity of the Emperor's premature reforms. Fifteen cities signed the first great Lombard League, the Pope at their head. This was the league of Pontida, a town situated between Milan and Bergamo.¹ The oath required was "to fight until extinction against Frederick, his son and heirs." The deputies of the league bound themselves to accept neither truce nor peace for twenty years from the date of the bond without the common consent; the expenses of the field to be equally shared amongst all. The Venetians, who were foremost in the formation of the league, promised efficient aid by a flotilla of galleys ascending the Po and the Brenta.

The inhabitants of Lombardy recovered their courage. Milan was partially reconstructed, and troops of hardy warriors throughout the lately disconsolate Lombard towns might be seen boldly entering the churches during the great Easter festivals of April, 1167, and at the baptismal fonts were heard to swear vehemently "the destruction of Frederick and of all his race."²

The Emperor appears to have been quite unconscious of the great change which had taken place against him,

¹ The cities were Bologna, Modena, Piacenza, Parma, Brescia, Bergamo, Milan, Lodi, Cremona, Ferrara, Verona, Vicenza, Padua, Tréviso, and Venice.

² The oath was tendered to every male member of the community between the ages of fourteen and sixty, as ratified in the terms of the League. *Sacramentum*, ec. ap. Murat. ann. Ital. iv., 261, Decembris, 1167.

and of the patriotism which now first glowed in the Italian hearts; but he was quite alive to the danger of the return of Alexander III. to Rome, and on crossing the Alps he moved at once towards that city. He was preceded by his warlike prelate, the Bishop of Mayence, to clear his way through Tusculum, which had been blockaded by the Romans. The Bishop was aided in this incongruous task by the Archbishop of Cologne, and the Romans were driven back to the gates of their own city. Frederick prepared to lay siege to Rome; but first he sent a solemn message of conciliation, proposing the "abdication of both the contending Popes," Alexander and Pascal, and the free election of another Pontiff, to be created at the hands of the Roman College.

Alexander III., stronger than ever in the support of almost all Christendom, and in that of nearly all Italy, lent, of course, not a moment's attention to this presumptuous offer; indeed, he had quite recently renewed his anathema against Frederick, whom he pronounced "fallen from his high sovereign dignity, an excommunicate son of the Church."

After this, both parties flew to arms. The Germans forced their way through the Porta Castelli and the "Curtain of St. Peter." The Romans, sheltered within the sanctuary, sent forth a shower of darts upon their adversaries, and in self-defence the latter fired the church, burning down the portico, and the adjacent church of Santa Maria. Alexander, who was residing at the Lateran, sought refuge first in the Frangipani Palace or fortress, within the area of the Coliseum; but having reason to apprehend the fidelity of the Roman people, he secretly left the city, and sought refuge at Benevento, under the protection of his old ally, William, from whence he again launched forth an anathema against Frederick.

It may be remarked that all great careers of triumph seem destined to have a turning-point, whether under spiritual censures or not, as well as all great earthly families; all at once a moment comes when nothing

prosper the man before whom, but a little previously, half the world seemed to bow. This moment had now come for Frederick. As it agreed with the Pope's last excommunication, the Italians overlooked the inefficiency of the former ones, and were firmly persuaded his succeeding disasters were solely to be attributed to that.

The Romans, having obtained the Emperor's promise to respect their liberties and to confirm the privileges of the Senate, now proposed to surrender; and with an apparent levity in the matter most interesting to their religious feelings, as well as to their pride, they promised voluntarily to Pascal III., as the legitimate head of the Church, the enjoyment of the Papal throne, and swore to defend his person and cause from every wrong.¹

At this very moment a frightful pestilence suddenly burst out with unusual fury amongst the Emperor's troops, and thinned their ranks with alarming rapidity. His own nephew, son of Conrad III., perished; so did Ronald, Archbishop of Cologne. The Bishops of Spire, Ratisbon, and Verdun, and above two thousand gentlemen, died of it. A panic seized on the survivors, who disbanded on all sides. The Emperor was rescued from danger of captivity, on his return towards the northern provinces, by the personal exertions of the powerful Ghibelline, Marquis of Malaspina, who escorted him past the dangerous defile of Pontremoli, where a Guelph force waited to seize him.

On his return to Pavia he instigated his Ghibelline Italian followers to lay waste the Contado of Milan and Piacenza, and he returned to Germany himself with but a handful of followers, early in the spring.

The happy consequences of the last Papal anathema (as the pestilences that dissolved the great army of Frederick were universally considered to be) endeared and exalted the power and the person of Alexander III. above all measure in Italy. The league rapidly rose in strength,

¹ *Jurabunt fidelitatem et coronam suam reggere et defendere contra omnes homines.* Lunig. Tom i., n. 8, p. 14. Colon. ed. Bochner, p. 440.

numbers, arms, wealth, and, best of all, in confidence in its own irresistible might. Had they not seen the army of Frederick dissolved, like that of Sennacherib before Israel, immediately after the Papal anathema at Benevento ?

The force of circumstances at home now detained Frederick in Germany until the year 1174. This, for Italy, most fortunate circumstance enabled her provinces to recruit their strength throughout. The accounts we have, and, still more significantly, the ruins still remaining of the edifices built at this period, effectually disprove all accusations of mere stupid, dull, dogged tyranny, such as the Italians had afterwards to undergo. The regulations of Frederick were offensive to the feelings of the Italians, and his Vicars were not always mild nor just; but no people ground down by what is understood as "tyranny" could in so incredibly short a space of time effect what the Lombard cities did, unless they had been not only very determined, but very wealthy, and at leisure to concentrate all their efforts on self-defence for the future, and with very great resources to enable them to provide magazines and stores of arms and of food. And it is clear that the policy of the Emperor, for which he was abhorred as a tyrant, in compelling them to keep the peace amongst each other, had eminently favoured this flourishing and prosperous state of the country.

In the short space of four years, we read of many strongholds being erected, of walls being built or efficiently repaired, of cities that were open being fortified, of others reconstructed or erected. We know of Alexandria "*della Paglia*," the refuge of the Milanese population, entirely formed into a great powerful fortress, as it is even now, under the name of Alexander III., and holding expressly under his feudal investiture. We know of the vast industry in woollen cloths that sprang up, as if by magic, under the teaching of the "*Umiliati fathers*," amidst the ruins of Milan. These, and many other tokens of the greatest material well-being, relieve the memory of Frederick from the sordid and mean charge of petty, grinding,

devastating, annihilating tyranny, and enable one to comprehend the lustre which still encircles his name in Germany.

The fatal campaign before Rome, of 1169, had, however, for the time exhausted the warlike resources of the Germans, intimidated also by the spiritual censures which had been so promptly followed by the devastations of pestilence; and when, in 1174, Frederick did return to Italy by the pass of Susa, he was followed by mere raw mercenaries, and rather resembled an adventurer in search of booty than an Emperor bent on conquering his rights. The new city and fortress of Alexandria lay before him, and, claiming it as an Imperial fief, he laid siege to it. Very little opposition seemed intended against him, and negotiations were willingly entered into at first, with friendly appearances. Deceived by these, Frederick gladly dismissed homewards the bulk of his burdensome and doubtful forces.

As soon as he was thus effectually weakened, the Guelph leaders rose in their demands, and, as the voice of one great country, insisted on the abrogation of the Decrees of Roncaglia. They would, they said, enjoy their old rights of alliance, the nomination of their own magistrates, and the control and the fixing of the amount of all dues on merchandise passing through each respective territory.

The Emperor as absolutely refused these inroads on the Imperial prerogative: and it was resolved to appeal to arms. After five months the Emperor was obliged to raise the siege of Alexandria; the want of provisions and the desertions from his army making it impossible to prevent it.

Hitherto the Emperor's enemies had been, so to speak, his natural ones—the Popes and the Italian cities; but a deeper and darker storm now arose in an unexpected quarter, and from a kinsman whom he had loaded with favours and benefits, and who had often fought by his side. He was Henry the Lion, nephew of the late Emperor Lothair, head of the German “Welfs,”

or Guelphs, the greatest feudal chief in the Empire, and possessing in his own right the duchies of Saxony, Bavaria, and Westphalia, to which Frederick had added the investiture of Brunswick and other fiefs confiscated to the crown under Conrad III. He descended, on the mother's side, from Otho II.; he was also the cousin-german of Frederick I. To these enormous possessions, and to his vast influence north of the Alps, Henry the Lion, spurred by ambition, resolved to add an Italian fief: and at the death of his uncle Welf, who had great estates in Italy, he claimed the latter as his undoubted right.

Frederick paid no attention to these asserted claims, and Henry retired to Germany. Summoned from thence, he at first refused to return, but on receiving a second peremptory summons, he complied; and the Emperor, not wholly free from doubts of him, but yet reluctant to credit his perfidy and ingratitude, went with the Empress to meet him at Chiavenna.

We have seen the occasional cruelties of Frederick, and his struggles for despotic prerogative; but no monarch could retain so lasting and pleasing a hold on popular and legendary affection unless he had had another and a more winning side of his character. In this instance all his family pride and affections were centred on his cousin, and he advanced eagerly to greet him with outstretched hand. "Thou art friend, cousin, and kinsman," he said, in accosting him; "all that is most dear. I have endowed thee with thy every most coveted possession; canst thou now abandon me in my hour of need—when peril surrounds my person, and threatens the honour of the Empire, of which I have raised thee to be the highest feudatory chief?"

Henry, having no real wrong to complain of, sought to excuse himself on the ground of "scruples of conscience," so long as Frederick was under the Papal anathema, and muttered that, as a reward for fresh services, he desired the Castle of Goslar, a stronghold contiguous to his domains.

Overcome by grief, wounded affection, and perhaps assailed by one of those moments of melancholy foreboding which sometimes sadden the hours of the most successful, Frederick cast himself at the feet of his ungrateful kinsman, and burst into tears. The Empress, interposing with womanly tact and dignity, gently upbraided her husband for this apparent self-abasement, and besought him to rise and to recollect his own dignity. Then turning to Henry, who remained unmoved, she added, "Forget not thou this day; and may the Almighty remember it in his record of events!"

The desertion of Henry the Lion turned the tide of events irretrievably against Frederick, and afforded to Lombardy one of those providential chances for emancipation, which make one comprehend that crime has its uses in the economy of the world. Henry the Lion, and all his formidable following, went over to the enemy; and the cause of Italy was therefore assured. Nor did the treason of Henry rest there. His defection aroused anew the slumbering party passions of Guelph and Ghibelline in Germany; and thus a division, detrimental to Frederick, was effected north of the Alps. The concluding disaster which closed the campaign was soon to follow.

The German feudal contingent (exclusive of the Guelph nobles) joined the Emperor at Como in the spring of 1176; and besides a thousand German mailed knights, the army was reinforced by the great Italian Ghibelline Marquis of Montferrat's troops, and contingents from Como and Pavia.

The opposite army was drawn from the flower of Northern Italy. In addition to the troops of the bitterly wronged Milan, Brescia sent forth her militia; Lodi added four hundred fighting men; Piacenza five hundred; and Novara and Vercelli sent their contingents, with others from the Marca di Ancona. The armies met at Legnagno (not the celebrated fortress of the Quadrilateral known best to us, but at another Legnagno), between Sesto and Milan. The Emperor led the charge of horse against the Italians; and the latter, inferior in numbers

and equipments, though sustaining the fight with great courage, were on the point of yielding, when the fortunes of the day were retrieved by the sudden reinforcement of nine hundred youths from Milan, who had sworn to defend the carroccio and liberty unto death. Invoking God and St. Ambrose, they rushed to the fray; the Imperialists were routed and driven back, Frederick himself unhorsed, and reported dead, and the Germans were pursued to the banks of the Ticino. The Empress, who was at Pavia, had already assumed mourning,¹ when the Emperor appeared almost alone before her.

By this time Frederick had reigned twenty-four years, and this was his seventh campaign in Italy. These expeditions had severally taken place in the years 1154, 1158, 1164, 1166, 1174, and 1176.

Time and misfortunes had fully convinced Frederick that his dream of "universal power" was but a delusion, and the defection of his nearest kinsman, Henry the Lion, made it hopeless to contend against the Lombard League. The instantaneous catastrophe which had followed the last Papal anathema had also convinced him of the necessity of calming the superstitious terrors of his subjects, by effecting a reconciliation with the Pope.

Alexander III., even then, did not venture to trust himself within the walls of Rome, and dwelt at Anagni, and there he received Christian, Archbishop of Mayence, the uncanonical nominee of Frederick, who despatched him to prepare the ground for an accommodation.

The aged Pontiff, worn himself by many trials and by the vicissitudes of life, was not unwilling to listen to a penitent foe; and it was agreed that a conference, in which all the parties interested should take part, was to meet in one of the Italian cities. A safe-conduct was granted to the Pontiff, under the Emperor's especial guarantee, during his journey through Italy; and on his arrival in Apulia, he found seven galleys at Lanciano, belonging to the King of Sicily. In these he em-

¹ Sire Raul, p. 1192. Vita Alex. III., p. 467. Abbot Usperg Chron., p. 297.

barked, accompanied by the highest Church dignitaries, and was conveyed to Venice. Two ambassadors of William II. also accompanied him—Romualdo, the chronicler, Archbishop of Salerno, and Roger d'Andria, Grand Constable of the Realm. The Doge of Venice, on his part, went to the Lido, with a sumptuous train, to welcome so illustrious and venerable a guest, and with every mark of the deepest respect; encircled with all the pomp of rank, and all the splendour of the rich city he now visited, Alexander III. made his triumphal entry, followed by the gilded barges of the senators, clergy, and nobility. The Pope, landing at the Piazzetta (which is so called to this day), walked processionally to the adjacent Church of San Marco, and returned thanks for the approaching return of peace, to be inaugurated in that city; for Venice had now been fixed upon for the meeting of the conference.

The choice had lain between Venice and Bologna. Frederick had named Venice, and the Lombards had preferred Bologna; but the Pope himself, after obtaining the promise of the Doge that Frederick should not enter it without his sanction, had himself decided in favour of Venice; which thus took for the first time a public and prominent part in a great Italian national question. The interests of the Church were represented by the cardinals chosen by Alexander. The King of Sicily had sent his own ambassadors; and the rectors of the confederate cities appeared in the name of the League. On the other side appeared the Archbishops of Mayence and Magdeburg, and other prelates, chiefly of irregular nomination, who spoke for the Imperial interest. The Bishop of Chermont represented France; the Abbé de Bonneval, England; these, together with the Doge, were to assume the part of friendly mediators, to mitigate the just severities of the offended Pontiff.

The debates were long, and promised to be protracted indefinitely; for, to avoid all suspicion, the Emperor was residing at Pomposa (a country seat near Ravenna), Alexander therefore requested him to advance to Chioggia,

near Venice. The most difficult question to agree upon proved to be the municipal liberties of the Lombard leagued cities; and as neither party would yield, a truce of six years was agreed upon, to begin August 1, 1177. The Sicilian ambassadors subscribed to it for fifteen years.

The basis of the treaty with the Church was then settled, and Count Dessan swore in the name of the Emperor to the terms of peace.

After this, Alexander III. thought himself bound to admit Frederick (who was to ratify the truce under his own hands) inside the walls of Venice. The principal points of this most important treaty were these:¹

The Pontiff Alexander III. was recognised by the Emperor as the legitimate sovereign head of the Church; Calixtus, the anti-pope, renounced his assumed title, and was to enjoy the grant of an abbey. The negotiators of peace, all informally elected during the schism, and other Ghibelline prelates, to the number of twelve, recommended by Frederick, were ratified in their dignities.²

All the other high dignitaries, and even the cardinals elected by the Emperor, and named by Calixtus, returned to their former position under Adrian IV. On the much disputed point of the revenues of the vast fiefs of the Countess Matilda, and which she had ceded to the Church, it was agreed that the usufruct of these should be granted to the Emperor for fifteen years. Most important, however, of all the clauses was the recognition of the Emperor's marriage. "The sovereign Pontiff, and his brethren the cardinals, recognise Beatrice, wife of the Emperor, as legitimate Empress, and Henry their son as King of the Romans. Pope Alexander promises to crown both these Princes, either by his own hand or through one of his delegates."³

The memorable date of the public entry of the penitent Emperor into Venice, and of his reconciliation with the

¹ *Tabula Pacis*, etc. ap. Lunig., T. i., p. 18.

² Si vero rogabit pro ordinibus aliquorum usque ad X. vel. XII, exaudiatur. (*Tabula Pacis*, Lunig., T. i., p. 18.)

³ Beatricem Alex. III. Pontif. aut Legatus coronabit et Henricum coronabit in Catholicum et Romanum regem. (*Tabula Pacis*, &c.)

Church, was the 24th of July, 1179. The son of the Doge, with seven galleys, proceeded to Chioggia, from whence they escorted the Emperor to the Monastery of San Niccola, where, in the presence of several cardinals, he pronounced his abjuration of his past conduct, and swore, after the solemn performance of mass, to renounce all schism, and to render homage and obedience to Pope Alexander. The prelates and princes of the Empire successively repeated the same oath.

Orders had been given to prepare for Frederick a reception worthy of his rank; and the picturesque and beautiful palaces, with their Moorish balconies, were hung with garlands and rich stuffs. The city was crowded to excess with foreigners of rank and their retainers. Eight thousand four hundred mailed knights, exclusive of the suites of the different parties interested in the Conference, served as a guard of honour to the latter.¹ In this motley crowd the fair hair and open brow of the North contrasted with the dark gleaming eye and features of Italy. The fair ladies of Venice, pre-eminent even then for their attractions, thronged every balcony, and the surface of the waters was hidden by the crowds of barges, "peote," and the draperies which hung on every side. The Doge and Patriarch of Venice, attended by the nobles and notables of the city, and by the clergy, with cross and crosier, welcomed Frederick under the great standard of San Marco, and conducted him processionally to the Portico of San Marco, beneath which, Alexander, his cardinals and archbishops, and the bishops of Lombardy, sat awaiting him.

Frederick had always been remarkable for the dignity and grace of his person and bearing; he was then not quite sixty years of age, and retained both in an eminent degree. On approaching the Pontiff he cast off his long upper robe or mantle (an insignia of rank), threw it at the feet of the Pope, and prostrated himself on the ground. Moved to tears by the humility of this unasked-for proof of penitence, the aged Pontiff raised him with tenderness,

¹ MSS. in the Library of San Marco, Class vii., c. 212., foglio 1, 9.

and gave him the kiss of peace.¹ The entire assembly passed into the church, where the thanksgiving followed. Next day (sacred to the Apostle James) the Pope officiated at mass in person; when again the Emperor came forward to meet him at the church door, with tokens of homage and obedience. Frederick a second time unclasped and doffed his princely mantle; accompanied the Pope to the foot of the altar, in the simple garb of a private gentleman, and made way for Alexander, as if he were one of the ushers of the Court. After mass, Alexander pronounced a Latin oration, which was translated into German by the Patriarch of Aquileia. After this, we are told, Frederick, in compliance with the Roman ceremonial, held the Pope's staff on issuing from the church, and received the Papal benediction in all due form.

But the impressive grandeur of the celebration of peace threw all other ceremonies into the shade. The great portals of San Marco were opened wide, and with tolling bells, amidst solemn hallelujahs, the Pope, with the Emperor by his side, and in full hearing of the delegates of the whole Catholic world and the Church dignitaries, having lighted a taper, he, Alexander, arose, and pronounced in clear and distinct language the Church's most solemn anathema against whomsoever should violate this amicable accord:—

“May their guilty souls perish, and be deprived for ever of the eternal light.”

As he thus spoke, he extinguished the taper in his hand. The Emperor responded in a voice equally clear and distinct, “Fiat, fiat,” and the words were re-echoed throughout the church, amongst the sobs and sighs of the multitudes, many of whom had doubtless had cause to mourn the war. Frederick remained a week in Venice,

¹ Romuald. Salern. Chronicle, p. 231. This account agrees too well with the whole conduct of Alexander III., subsequently to the victory of Legnano, to permit us to doubt it. A later and apocryphal tale, indeed, runs of the Pope having put his foot on the neck of the prostrate Emperor, or of having given him a kick, but it rests on no contemporary authority. Alexander III. merely adverts to the meeting with Frederick in the following terms: “Nobis obedientiam et reverentiam exhibuit.” Labbe. T. x., p. 1488.

during which he agreed with the Doge on a treaty of commerce in every way lucrative and advantageous to Venice.

From thence date those immense mercantile bodies of travellers and merchandise, which moved through the Pass of Calliano, up through the Tyrol, and which were accompanied by bands of minstrels, conjurers, and similar entertainers of the populace. These caravans were exempted from all arbitrary exactions on their route, and carried the drugs and luxuries of the East into the very heart of Germany. All the former concessions of Otho and his successors to Venice were ratified anew. These chiefly related to the monopoly of salt, of fisheries, and of the right to purchase timber and furs from the Imperial forests, and for the regulation of the eternal disputes about "tolls on rivers, bridges and fords, and rights-of-way."

On his part, as recognition of favours received, the Doge engaged to pay annually fifty lire in money, and the same value in *pepper*, together with the complimentary offering of a standard.¹

Before the Emperor left Venice for Burgundy, 17th September, 1177, he swore to maintain to the letter the treaty of peace, and he kept his word.

The Pope, after a month's stay at Venice, returned to Anagni, from whence he was finally persuaded to return to Rome, where he was enthusiastically received. Oaths of allegiance were voluntarily tendered to him, and the restitution of the rights of Regalia was promised.

The truce of six years which had been covenanted gave the Italian cities time to heal their internal wounds, and to consolidate their strength. Henceforth the prestige of the "Holy Roman Empire" was broken for ever. Frederick was now upwards of sixty-two years of age, and in his chequered career had learnt the vanity of his

¹ Promisit dux Venet. nobis et successoribus nostris pro hujus pactionis fœdere annualiter omne mense Martio per solvere libras suorum denariorum L et totidem libras piperis et unum pallium. (12 Kal. Septembris, series privileg. et pactorum Pontificum et Imperatorum: San Marco MSS.)

earlier dreams : indeed, the treachery of Henry the Lion seems to have completely altered and saddened his life. At the conclusion of the truce the Italian and Imperial Rectors met at Piacenza, and on the 1st of May, 1183, the basis of a treaty was established, which was afterwards ratified at Constance, by the Emperor, on the 25th of June. This treaty has since been considered as the foundation of the "civil rights" of the Italians. Amongst the most important clauses are the following :¹

"We, Frederick, Emperor, together with our dear son, Henry, King of the Romans,² grant in perpetuity under the present (bond), to the cities, countries, and persons forming the association, such liberties and franchise-ments as are already therein established, as well within the towns as in the outward boundaries. Items, comprised under the denomination of 'foderum,' pastures, forests, water-courses, bridges, and mile-stones; the right of building fortresses; the jurisdiction of civil and criminal judicature. It being our will that the said cities should continue to enjoy these privileges as heretofore up to the present time."

The rights of arming the native militia, of contracting and maintaining leagues, and of naming their own magistrates, were all confirmed.³ Sentences of confiscation were annulled, and the virtual and national independence of Northern Italy was recognised.⁴ Some formal and nominal Imperial rights were still retained, but these soon fell into disuse.

Such was the oath of allegiance to the Emperor's person; to be taken by all male members of the population between the ages of fifteen and sixty; and the gratuitous investiture and confirmation of all the Podestàs and Magistrates freely elected by the communities.

All civil cases involving interests superior to the value of twenty-five lire of Imperial money were to be referred

¹ Pax Constantiæ (7 Kalen Julii, 1183) Pertz. T. iv., p. 175.

² Then about eighteen years of age.

³ Societatem quam nunc habent tenere et quoties voluerunt renovare liceat. (Acta Pacis Constantiæ.)

⁴ Muratori gives the text of the Treaty. Antiq. Ital. T. iv., p. 317.

to the Emperor, and by him adjudged through the medium of magistrates chosen by him, who were to give sentence within two months, in strict conformity *to the custom* of the country, town, or city in which the case was pleaded.

It was also stipulated that the King of the Romans, passing through Italy on his way to receive the Imperial crown at Rome, was to have free passage over all the roads, bridges, and fords; and that conveyance should be offered to him, as well as all necessities for himself, his suite, and followers, as well as during his residence within the Lombard cities, over which the right of "Regalia" was reserved. But it was promised that a *discreet use* only should be made of these privileges and rights, which had often been so hatefully abused.

Thus the political interests of the Italian communities were legally established, nor did Frederick ever attempt to evade the strict fulfilment of his obligations.

The destinies of the Peninsula were thenceforth virtually in their own keeping. If ever there was a moment for a ransomed population to exclaim, "Not by our power and might, but by Thy hand, oh Lord, have we gotten the victory," it was this; for the plague before Rome, and the treason of Henry the Lion, could not but be deemed visible interpositions of Providence, occurring as they did exactly at the moment so propitious to the Guelph party in Italy, and overawing the most bitter foes of the latter, their own brethren the Ghibellines. History has rarely to record a treaty so well observed as that of Constance. The Emperor received the oath of fealty from all the Lombard deputies, consuls, and Podestàs in the names of their respective communities; and to each he, in return, gave a standard as a token of formal investiture of their stipulated rights.

When the heat of passion had died away, and the wise regulations of Frederick were no longer offensive to the feelings of the Italians, by being forced on them, either by a conqueror or a rival, many of them were adopted voluntarily by the natives, a fact which must suffice to clear his memory from the accusation of being merely a

brutal and vulgar despot, and to establish his claim to high intellectual and administrative capacity; and it is scarcely necessary to point out that whilst in the East power is invariably associated with decrepitude and decay, in Western Europe it is often allied with genius far in advance of its age. Whilst, therefore, we fully sympathise with the Italians who leagued against a stranger and a conqueror, we cannot indiscriminately level the latter to the traditional tyrant of the Levant. We have impartially shown from undoubted testimony that even in these particular instances of cruelty, which are his greatest reproach, he was far outdone by the Italians themselves; nor can we forget that one hundred years later, when there arose a clamour for the utter destruction of Florence at the hands of the Italians, only one voice, that of *Farinata degli Uberti*, rose to plead for so "nobile e gentile" a city.

In future pages we shall trace, with equal impartiality, the use and the abuse the cities made of their rights and privileges, and the long vicissitudes of the Peninsula, until, from the Alps to the southernmost point of the land, she once more exultingly cried aloud, "By Thy right hand and by Thy holy arm, oh Lord, we have gotten the victory."

And this time the victory is not of war and of rivalries; it is the victory of union and of peace. The enemies of Italy are now aliens; her sons have at last recognised their common brotherhood.

The mere narrative of the vivid and interesting struggle between the "Tiara and the Crown" would be incomplete without some considerations of the domestic state of Italy, and some remarks on the broad and definite line of demarcation which now, more than ever, separated her in sympathies and interests from the rest of Europe, and more especially from Germany, the great empire, perpetually pressing on her frontiers.

Every other kingdom was warlike and aggressive; but if we except the commercial dominion of the Venetians in the east, and the romantic forays of some of the Nor-

mans (who could not be classed as Italians), the natives of the Peninsula, far from being dangerous neighbours, later in the course of events, hired bands of Catalonians, English, Burgundians, Slaves, and other foreigners to defend them from one another. We have already adverted to the slender hold the spirit of chivalry had on Italy, though its outward forms and fashions were observed. The same apathy existed towards the higher and nobler qualities of military genius.

Even in far later times, Piero Strozzi and Montecucculi, Alessandro Farnese, and some other illustrious generals, had to leave Italy for fame, and in pursuit of glory. The Peninsula could not be called pacific, as the Middle Ages present one unbroken series of mutual aggressions and of petty warfares; sometimes darkened by atrocities such as the sieges and the sack of Cremona and of Prato. But more often a strange, and to us unsatisfactory, game of how to avoid pitched battles was carried on.

The most sanguinary pages, indeed, of these times were the "civil ones." The murder of Carmagnola by the Venetians, and that of Baldo di Anghieri by the Florentines, so pathetically told with laconic brevity by Machiavelli, as the reward of serving them too well, are amongst the most terrible and striking examples of these fierce deeds. But the genius of the nation was certainly not military; it was the only country in Europe where it was no disgrace not to be a soldier. In Germany, on the contrary, the feudal rule, though often abused, was yet in perfect harmony with the feeling of protection given and received by superior to inferior. There were free towns in Germany, as there were feudal tenures in Italy; but the genius of the one nation has always been aristocratic or feudal; and that of the other democratic and communistic. It was upon ground so well fitted to receive the seed that the great scheme and the temporal ideas of Hildebrand fell, and it naturally followed that throughout the Middle Ages Italian and Churchman were almost synonymous.

Not that the Italians were more penetrated than others with the real feelings of pure religion; the peasantry of Brittany, of the Tyrol, and of Germany have always been infinitely more pious, and, above all, more reverent in their devotions, than they are. But the intellectual chain of tradition, education, and of learning had remained almost unbroken in Italy; and whilst every other nation was figuratively stumbling over the alphabet, the great mass of the Italian cultivated community understood not only Italian, but also Latin, and almost all could read and write. The writer of the present pages has seen, taken from an ancient folio volume of Avicenna, a strip of paper which had been used as a mark; the outward end was yellow from age, but the inner fold was perfect, and contained a little boy's note to his father (perhaps the owner of the folio), beautifully written in the old Italian character, and dated from Arezzo in the middle of the 15th century, addressed to his father, "a physician" in Florence. The paper is admirable, and the ink of that jet black quality which we so often envy. The pen had been apparently a reed. It is doubtful if at that period many such letters were written by children except in Italy.

To the peculiar tenacity and yet flexibility of the priestly character the Italian added, as we have seen, very early, the highest capacity for commercial enterprise; another cast of mind essentially adverse to the feudal or German. Very often the two were combined. The ecclesiastical law did not then forbid religious bodies to embark in pursuits of traffic; on the contrary, the security of the convent, and the fixed habits of lives embraced by religious vows, were the best schools for all lawful and peaceful trades. To redeem these from the contempt in which military prejudice and sloth held them, the all-powerful sanction of religion was necessary. And thus, even in secular pursuits, the great and prophetic spirit of Hildebrand aided the civilization of his country.

Hildebrand died about 1085, and during the hundred

years which elapsed between his death and that of Frederick Barbarossa, the gigantic schemes which his majestic genius had conceived had already begun to be partially realised. In Italy the supremacy of the Pope, even as a temporal sovereign, had begun to be asserted over the traditional claims of the German emperors; and we cannot question on which side the superiority at that moment assuredly lay. The very daily interests of the Italians, as well as their pride, were in favour of a power which, instead of transporting their treasures beyond the Alps, brought them, on the contrary, all the gains of wealthy pilgrims, and the gifts of distant potentates to favourite shrines. To the nobler and purer spirit, infused also by Hildebrand into the Church, can be distinctly traced the many charitable foundations, the faint beginnings of which preceded the reign of Barbarossa, but which increased so rapidly immediately after the peace of Placentia; and the superiority of education, which at once placed the Italian on so far higher a level than his transalpine contemporary. It was happy for the country, then feebly emerging from the yokes of many conquerors, that the commanding and practical ability of this great Pontiff applied the best remedy to the wounds inflicted by barbarism, and pointed out the "path of Heaven," by which so great a number of his countrymen could escape them. The personal ruggedness and unpopularity of Hildebrand somewhat retarded the realisation of his views, and circumstances softened their overbearing exaggeration; but in all that was wisest, most national, and best in the development of the communal civilization, we can trace his master-hand.

By the same strange fatality which has chilled the hopes and blasted the wise intentions of so many Pontiffs, Rome itself, divided into fortresses of great nobles, and into the mere abode of an ignorant, fickle, and turbulent multitude, remained the least impressed by all the examples of stern and persevering virtue of Hildebrand and his cardinals. But we have the clearest evidence of his immense influence over the Lucchese, the Lunigiana,

the Riviera, the estates of the great Countess, and, though more faintly, in Lombardy.

It may well be inquired how the Ghibelline spirit could under these circumstances so long subsist in Italy, and how the loyalty to the Empire survived for centuries? Unfortunately there is but one answer to make: the aggressions and oppressions of the Italians upon each other, and the share the Roman Court but too often took, from mercenary motives, or at the instigations of passion and nepotism, in these bitter and bloody feuds, serves as their only excuse. Cities often gave themselves to the Emperors "to live in liberty," a sad and significant comment upon the treatment they received at the hands of their countrymen.

We cannot either be blind to the fact that the loftiest traits of generosity, of delicacy, of humanity, and even of science and letters, are found amongst the Ghibelline nobles of Italy. The study of Count Litta's great work proves this beyond dispute. Whether there was something of a commoner fibre in the great trading cities, or whether the feeling of an illustrious lineage, and the habit of command, when subjected to the faith of Christianity, really does give a higher caste to the character of the few who rise above the rank of mere "feudatories," we cannot tell; but the foregoing fact is certain.

Another complete act of the great drama of the struggle between the Papacy and the Empire has now been concluded, less dramatic than the first, but more complete in its teachings, and bearing more directly on the destinies of Upper Italy. We have placed our remarks upon Hildebrand at its close, because all his spirit pervaded the century which preceded the Peace of Placentia; and because we shall now proceed to follow out the concluding act under the last and the greatest of the heroic line of Hohenstauffen.

CHAPTER XI.

Frederick II. and the Popes.

THERE are ages in which the human mind, after maturing through the evolution of circumstances, gives a new and abundant harvest of fruit to civilization; to be afterwards treasured, multiplied, and fitted to the wants of society.

At such times a generally revolutionary element pervades all classes, and seems to harmonise with a corresponding series of convulsions of Nature. We hear of heresies, persecutions, pestilence, famine, and penury; of fierce and sanguinary contests and intestinal wars; and, again, of earthquakes converting cities into deserts, of floods, and tempests swooping down with the unerring force of fate, and annihilating the existence of man and the traces of his labours.

A momentary repose seems granted after these stormy changes; nature resumes her serene aspect, the landscape, though new in features, presents familiar products, and, in like manner, the human mind seems, after analogous convulsions, to revert constantly to the same elements, though exhibited in novel and ever progressive combinations.

The age of Frederick II. tallies, both in political and in physical aspects, with the above description.

Civilization, as understood by the codifying of a barbarous medley of legislative enactments, by the progress of positive science, by the flourishing state of commerce, by the diffusion of poetry, and by the more enduring testimony of the "Arts," made rapid advance; whilst heresies, and the persecutions they awoke, bore testimony to intellectual activity and the enduring ardour of faith which courted martyrdom.

Earthquakes, inundations, fires, and their accompany-

ing plagues of pestilence and famine, are likewise accurately chronicled. We cannot fail to be struck by the strange coincidence of that age with the events of our own day, and we turn to the investigation of that half-forgotten era with the eagerness of novelty, as it is the variety in sameness on the surface of nature that most attracts and charms, and makes us feel the one governing power which guides perpetual change.

The great reign of Frederick II. resumes and closes the brilliant epoch of the "Ghibelline" influence in Italy. The crimes and errors of the emperors, aided by their intrinsic weakness in the executive part of their power, made it sink before the rising energy of the Italian states, cemented by the tie of kindred and the glory of religion; for let us remark at the outset that modern civilization dates from Italy, and rose with the power of Rome; though it was superficially adorned by the graces of French and Teutonic chivalry. But the latter will be observed to decline as we proceed, and the Guelphic principles to rise with steady triumph, as the keys of Peter surmount the eagles of the Empire.

We pass over the reign of Henry VI., son of Frederick Barbarossa. He was weak, worthless, and wicked. He married Constance, the daughter and heiress of Roger, last King of Sicily. Many prophecies foretold greatness to her son ere he was born. The Abbé Flores predicted he would be a "brand which would set the world a-light;" other complaisant prophets announced his greatness, and his genius; and, for once, flattery failed rather in truth than by falsehood of exaggeration. At the death of Henry VI. Constance assumed the government of her ancestral domains in Southern Italy with a wisdom and firmness which left it a matter of regret that she only survived her husband a year and a few months. Her son had indeed been separated from her, even from his earliest infancy, but she caused him to be immediately brought to Palermo, and to be crowned there May 17, 1197. She then immediately dismissed the German mercenaries of her husband and his High Seneschal, Markwald of

Anweiler, to whose cruel and avaricious perfidy it was chiefly owing that rapine, violence, and larceny were called "German customs" (*vizii allemanni*).¹ Markwald had, moreover, arrogantly laid claim to the tutelage of her infant son.

Constance, whilst dismissing the German mercenaries, summoned around her such of the Norman barons as were faithful to her cause; and in concurrence with them she consigned the person of the infant Frederick to the care of the Roman Pontiff, and made the reigning Pope, Celestin III., a man of mild and conciliating disposition, regent of her dominions, then in a state of utmost anarchy. The Pontiff accepted the trust bequeathed to him by the testament of Constance; and she died at Palermo, 29th November, 1198, at the age of forty-five, having only survived her husband Henry VI., surnamed the Cruel, fourteen months.

The successor of Celestin III. was a Pontiff destined to celebrity under the title of Innocent III. He was originally named Lothair, and was son of the Count of Segni, in the Roman territory. Born in 1169, he ascended the Papal throne in 1197, when just thirty-seven, in the full vigour of his age and faculties.

Lothair was irreproachable in conduct; gentle and noble in demeanour, and of a middle stature. He had a prompt wit, ready judgment, and inflexible will. Besides these gifts of nature, he was profoundly versed in all the learning of his age; he had studied law, letters, and philosophy at Rome, at Bologna, and in Paris; and before he had tasted the sweets of supreme power, he had shown a disposition to seek more ideal pleasures than the business of this world can give. He had even published a book of great beauty of thought and of style against "Worldliness." He was equally conversant in the French, Latin, and Italian languages (the last had, even at that early period, acquired the grace and polish of a matured tongue). Lothair understood besides the theory and practice of music, and excelled in "Canto

¹ Rich. de S. Germ., p. 978. B.

Fermo," so famous in the Church music of the Roman ritual.

To his high birth he owed the generosity of a liberal hand in the relief of distress, but he practised severe economy on his private and personal outlay, whilst the dignity and splendour of his state on occasions of outward ceremony outshone that of any of his predecessors.

Naturally prone to anger, he subdued his impetuosity with equal promptitude, and but for his implacable and sanguinary excesses of savage barbarity to all who differed from him in the niceties of religious opinion, and whom he styled the enemies of Christ, Innocent III. would have well-nigh attained the pitch of almost ideal virtue.

Human nature, subdued and chastened, however, on every other point, found refuge in the exaltation of every crime, when exercised against "religious dissent" from his will; every tie of nature and of morality, gratitude, duty, affection, all became inexpiable enormities when pleaded in behalf of the "heretic." In so cultivated and refined a mind, it can scarcely be conceded that this bloodthirsty and relentless cruelty was the same fruit of native rudeness as was the savage brutality of his great prototype Hildebrand; it must rather have been the effect of a deliberate calculation, unchecked by conscience, and persuaded that "terror" was the best way of ruling mankind.

Except when the pages of his life are defiled by torture and by blood, the high capacity of this Pontiff, standing in bold relief from his contemporary sovereigns, strikes us with unaffected admiration. Immediately after his election, he undertook the whole business of the state, without waiting for the ceremony of consecration, which was deferred, per force, until he had taken orders; for he was a simple deacon when named to the chair of St. Peter; and, with a master-stroke of policy, he opened the coffers of his predecessor, and distributed the treasures they contained to those around him, conciliating by this sweeping generosity all services likely to be useful to him. He then put aside all residents of a German origin from

any office in the city or state, and nominated the powerful and influential magistrate who, since Arnaldo da Brescia's reformed administration, had been called "Senator of Rome," to fill that high post. He selected, of course, a man entirely devoted to himself.

Under his wise and vigorous rule, many rebellious chiefs who held strong castles returned to the obedience of the Church, and in the year 1197 all the civil magistrates, who had up to that period taken the oath of fidelity to the Emperor (as agreed on in the compact between the Empire and the Church), took it to the Pope, and thus the last trace of Imperial suzerainty was effaced in Rome.

Innocent III. was consecrated on the 22nd of February, 1197, and on the following day the Prefect of Rome took the oath, in the presence of the cardinals, "to be faithful to the head of the Church and his legitimate successors,"¹ and promised to defend them against mankind at large.² The Pope then bestowed on him a "mantle," in token of acceptance of his allegiance. The Roman nobles and magistrates all followed the example set, and a sentiment of fealty seemed to arise spontaneously, and consolidate the power of the Pontiff as a temporal sovereign.

Innocent III. then addressed circular letters to the rectors, nobles, and people of the different communities which had been at any time subject to the Roman jurisdiction, to advance claims to their present fealty.³ "Your city," he said, "belongs to the Apostolic See, and has been torn from it by the most culpable violence. This cannot, however, annul or destroy the Church's incontrovertible rights. Hasten, therefore, to offer the oath of fealty in the hands of our legates, in order that ye may enjoy the blessings of peace under the Pontifical sway."

Energetic, insinuating, generous, and stern by turns,

¹ This meant, of course, under canonical election.

² *Contra omnem hominem.* (Epistle Innocent III., Lib. 1, n. 23, p. 12.) This was exactly the formula, it will be remembered, of the oath of allegiance tendered to the Emperor up to this time.

³ *Fecit sibi fidelitatem ab omnibus exhiberi.* (*Gesta Inn. III.*, §. 8.)

he took the human conscience by storm, or penetrated its feebleness, as occasion required, and, one after the other, the cities so summoned returned submissively to his rule.

But it was on the wider field of European policy that the genius of Innocent III. was soon to be exercised, and that he inaugurated a policy which has stamped his age with his name. Far beyond the narrow range of the patrimony of St. Peter, his commanding and comprehensive intellect descried the propitious moment for guiding human as well as divine affairs.

The Pontificate of Innocent III. is memorable by the institution of the Mendicant Orders: that of the Minorites of St. Francis sprang into existence exactly at this moment.

The quickening aid of meekness, charity, and self-denial, the aid of "holiness," in short, was wanted in the Church, to counteract the pernicious effect of the dissolute hierarchical orders, and of the bloodthirsty Dominicans. The Minorites recognised no difference of classes. To them mankind was "one great brotherhood." They preached only the Evangelical doctrines of piety, humility, and charity. They preached the duty of labour, and the exercise of charity as a *right*; they spoke the language of the people, and addressed themselves to the humble capacities of their hearers by apologues or fables, by legends and illustrations drawn from surrounding and familiar objects. In reading the records which have been preserved of this quaint and shadowy period, we seem wandering in a maze of eastern fable. The birds, fishes, beasts, speak at every step. The supernatural is unhesitatingly brought in. Our Saviour descends to speak face to face with His saints. The wolf leaves his predatory habits and bears the wallet of the friar, and so on. This mode of address has ever been successful with the ignorant and simple of all ages, and in the twelfth century, when the greatest portion of mankind fluctuated between the grossest superstitions of paganism and the incomprehensible mysteries of the

Roman ritual, recited in an unknown tongue, this system proved invaluable.

To the Minorites of St. Francis, society was indebted at that moment for the diffusion of the new doctrine that man was *raised in dignity and ennobled*, instead of being "cursed and degraded," *by labour*, even though servile; and a spirit of greater consideration for those defenceless and oppressed classes, which had been hitherto reckoned hardly in the same rank as beasts of burden, becomes perceptible.

The founder of these orders was Francis of Assisi, a young man of burgher birth and large fortune, whose mind became opened to the loftiest truths of ascetic religion in consequence of a severe malady, which followed a course of great worldly pleasure and recklessness in which he had taken delight. A constant and steady flow of "spiritual light" was henceforth vouchsafed to him: he was subject to trances, which, though common to enthusiasts (on whatsoever subject their minds unceasingly dwell), are accepted by the uneducated in all countries as *proofs* of celestial inspiration. The upper valley of the Tiber is, to this day, the classical ground of traditions respecting St. Francis of Assisi, and his very first convent is still seen there preserved in all its rude simplicity.

In the year 1210 he made a journey to Rome with a few followers, to obtain the sanction of his order from the great Pontiff, who had then swayed the destinies of Europe for twelve years. At first their demands were met with contempt; but a change soon came over the spirit of Innocent, as the chroniclers say, "in a dream," which showed him a vision of the "*Church triumphant*," by means of the new order. Dreams and visions were, at that period, the usual reasons alleged, and implicitly accepted, as satisfactory causes for all changes of opinion; it is highly probable, considering the vast capacity and penetrating genius of Innocent III., that his first moment of incredulity (which the filthy and insane outward appearance of the new apostles may well excuse) passed when it dawned on his mind that no better instru-

ments could be found to convert the alien and conciliate the wavering masses of the common people than those poor humble friars : those same " people," be it noted, being all angrily hostile at that moment against the oppressions and crimes of the hierarchical orders, and of too many of the religious ones also.

Innocent III. had, therefore, a second meeting with these strange and sordid-looking regenerators of the world. When we recollect the birth and education of Innocent, and when we remember that one of the greatest merits of the future Minorites was to wear the rags rejected even by wayside beggars, to abjure every description of personal cleanliness, to dispense with every artificial aid of razor and comb, and to respect with Oriental tenderness the most loathsome vermin, we cannot wonder at the prudence of the great Pope, who only conceded to them an unwritten and temporary permission to constitute themselves into the society of "*Minorites of the tertiary Order*" of *St. Francis* (by which, after their founder's death, they were henceforth to be known). All the other orders of religious were confined to the seclusion of their own convents ; but those of *St. Francis* had the mission of going forth from thence throughout the land. They were safe from robbers, for they had nothing to lose ; their very garments would have been rejected by the most needy, and save these and their staff, of property they had none. They could not be put to ransom, for they belonged to a community without lands and without moneys—the rough walls of whose cells were often hewn out of the rock. Everywhere the disciples of *St. Francis* passed, therefore, free ; and for upwards of two centuries, we may add, the glory of the Evangelical virtues of their founder was, on the whole, well maintained by his followers and their disciples. When Innocent III. was induced by policy, or by conviction, to yield to the requests of these fervid but unsavoury apostles, the state of Europe was agitated and undermined by countless novel and daring currents of opinion, which the most sanguinary persecution had failed to suppress. Favoured

by a singular combination of circumstances, the Pontiff had, indeed, for twelve years enjoyed almost despotic rule. He had, of his own authority, annulled the election of the infant Frederick II., whose guardian he was; he had seized on Ancona and on Umbria; he had taken the part of Otho of Brunswick in Germany, whom he afterwards excommunicated; he had placed France under an interdict to punish Philip Augustus for his unauthorised divorce of Ingeborge of Denmark; he had disposed of the crowns of Bohemia and Bulgaria; he had received the homage of John of England for his kingdom; and availing himself of the seizure of Constantinople by Baldwin, he had made himself the arbiter of the Eastern Empire.

These great and undoubted acts of supremacy were not, however, carried out without creating an alarming and impassioned opposition.

Of Innocent III.'s personal qualities we have spoken at length, to show that, except on the point of his unmitigated and savage bloodthirstiness (resembling rather that of a Jewish high priest than the milder feelings of a Christian), he almost realised the ideal of a Pontiff. But it could not be supposed that his instruments, his legates and vicars, shared in any degree his loftier virtues. On the contrary, they made themselves the aids of craft, crime, and carnage, wheresoever power and lucre could be won by so doing. Over all Europe the scandals of their extortions, and the effrontery of their connivance at deeds of the most barbarous ferocity and injustice, resounded far and near, and roused a feeling of vengeance and abhorrence in the lower classes, which was speedily fed by the religious opinions of the various sects, at that time rapidly disseminating their theories throughout Europe, and creating an opposition which survived every device of cruelty and of persecution, of torture and of infamy. This freedom of spirit continued through long ages, and, purified of its Eastern superstitions allied to Manichæism, it has arisen triumphant in our own days, and is the animating pulse of modern society, asserting not the narrow dogma of one foreign

priest, but the imprescriptible rights of man, and the ennobling and sacred duties and virtues of patriotism—virtues which, as experience has shown (in accordance with the teachings of reason), must ever be clouded and obscured when a “foreign or spiritual sovereign” reigns over the *conscience* of citizens.

In the age of Innocent III., however, opposition to the vices and abuses of his agents showed itself in a *fanaticism* which (though based upon just revolt against oppression) was liable to fall into great errors. This rebellious spirit was subdued, but never extirpated, by the series of butcheries which have stained the Pontificate of Innocent III., the otherwise just and humane Pope. Amidst these hideous massacres and scenes of brutalizing torture, the gentle voices of the Minorites, preaching the “elementary truths of Christianity,” and proffering its consolations to the humblest, in their *own mother tongue*, formed an auxiliary aid to Rome, which, though not immediately recognised, has since been acknowledged to the fullest extent.

In the north of Italy particularly, where the Paulician heresy was fast captivating the multitude, always the least docile of the subjects of despotic dogma, the Minorites were invaluable.

Constantine Sylvanus had been the founder of the *Paulicians*, or Fellow-pilgrims, in the year 660. They were first heard of in Syria; their leading dogma was regeneration by faith; they believed also in predestinarianism; they chiefly studied the doctrines of St. Paul; they practised the severest austerities, and, instead of Christian legends, they adopted some of those of Zoroaster, in conformity with that frame of the human mind which in the East seems to make the intervention of some “third world” of spirits essential between man and his Creator. In the tenth century, this sect flourished under the Emperor Zemices; in the thirteenth, we find it spreading in Italy and in France. In Bulgaria it had long been dominant, and traders carried it up the valley of the Danube, even to the heart of Bohemia, from whence it

has never (under other names) ceased to exist. From Africa the sect passed to Spain, and into Languedoc and the district of "Albi," where the heresy was afterwards known under the name of "Albigenses." In Italy the common name that distinguished its followers was that of *Paterini*. The nobles and magistrates ardently sided with the clergy in destroying the members of this sect. They held and boldly preached doctrines as subversive of feudal rights as of Papal, or at least of clerical interests (for the mere person of the Pope seems to have been commonly reputed as sacred by them). In Milan they attracted notice in 1176, as "Cathari," "Credenti," "Gazzari," and "Concorrenti." But they had many other names; the "Bonuomini," "Giuseppini," "Flagellans," "Publicani," were all of almost the same sect. They rejected the doctrines of the sacraments of matrimony and of "penance," denied the efficacy of baptismal regeneration, and did not acknowledge the "real presence" in the eucharist. They declared oaths and capital punishments unlawful, and that no priest under mortal sin could with validity administer the divine ordinances. They also preached that the successors of the Apostles were bound to follow the apostolic example of poverty.

It will be seen that the *new order of Minorites* met these sectaries half way on their own grounds—in privations, in brotherly offices of charity, in austere self-denial, in poverty the most absolute. And thus the feelings of many wavering consciences were confirmed, and many aliens were reconverted back to the Catholic Church. To the women, as was natural, the tender legends and incessant intervention of the supernatural offered an irresistible attraction. Thus, in less than a century after the introduction of the Minorite order, we find the feeling in favour of the *Paterini* completely altered, chiefly by the zeal and success of the order of St. Francis in the missions and in the pulpit.

Innocent III., as guardian of the young King of Sicily, had bestowed on him the highest order of education the

age afforded. He had also conducted the administration of the kingdom with consummate skill. In the year 1208, by desire of the Pope, Frederick was declared of age, and the nominal reins of power were placed in his hands.

In this early part of his life Frederick was sagacious and wary to a degree almost unparalleled in history ; and by thus studying the art of government under his able counsellors, the power of the great and turbulent vassals was restrained, and that of the Saracens, who had made common cause with the Germans still resident in the kingdom, reduced into limits of subordination. In conformity with the wise precedents of his Norman predecessors, Frederick attached the Saracens more particularly around his own person, and thus brought about a comparative state of peace, so favourable to letters and to commerce that agriculture and trade prospered in a degree almost unknown before throughout his fertile and favoured kingdom. But though Innocent III. had asserted the rights of Frederick II. to the kingdom of his mother, he had no intention, at that time, of favouring his name as a candidate for the Empire, although a party devoted to the house of Hohenstauffen would gladly have brought it forward. The contest between the Guelph and Ghibelline parties of Germany had meantime continued to rage, and each had acknowledged as king the head of its own party. Thus Philip of Swabia, overlooking the rights or interests of Frederick, allowed himself to be crowned King of Germany ; or, rather, he allowed himself to assume the arrogant title of "King of the Romans," March, 1198.

Philip was the youngest son of Frederick Barbarossa, and consequently uncle to Frederick II. Although Innocent III. had, of his own authority, annulled the claim of "Emperor" of the infant Frederick (as we have already seen), yet he did not intend that a Hohenstauffen and a Ghibelline, the son of Frederick Barbarossa, should succeed to that dignity ; and he threw all the

weight of his influence into the scale of the "Guelphs," who favoured the nomination of Otho of Brunswick, a bold, able military commander, the second son of Henry the Lion, the latter being the same whom we have seen at the siege of Alexandria turn in treachery against Barbarossa.

Otho was the nephew of Richard Plantagenet, sur-named the Lion-hearted; and held of him in fief the provinces of Guyenne and Poiteux.

Otho was conspicuous for many traits which are common to the Normans: a dauntless military chief, able to conciliate all classes in turn, loose in conduct, but keeping on excellent terms with the clergy, and unscrupulous in his promises to win the favour of partisans. Protected and subsidised by Richard of England, Otho landed at Antwerp with a numerous following of Gascons and Englishmen, made a solemn entrance into Cologne, and was elected by his own party to the throne of Germany, May 15th, 1198, about ten weeks after the Ghibellines had elected Philip of Swabia, at Mulhausen.

Philip was the flower of the princes of Hohenstauffen; his disposition was mild, his education had been of a superior kind, his abilities were very great, and he was enthusiastically beloved by his party: but all the hopes created by the promise of this able and accomplished prince were fated to expire, for he was assassinated in his bed in the year 1208, at the age of twenty-eight, by his own near kinsman, Witel, whom he had in some way offended. This crime left the field open to Otho, who, at first, affected the most profound subserviency to Rome; and in order to unite the contending parties of Guelph and Ghibelline, it was agreed, under Papal dispensation, to wed, or rather to contract for future wedlock, the young daughter of Philip, Beatrice, then only eleven years of age, to Otho. The wife of Philip, the gentle Irene, devotedly attached to him, had expired of grief at his death; and now their only child, arrayed in deepest mourning, was brought forward to be married and crowned. A strange

and melancholy fate awaited this infant bride. She grew up lovely ; and, in due course of years, the previous contract was to be ratified, but when invested in all the splendours of her royal wedding robes, the poor young princess sank back in the arms of her attendants and expired !

The nominal union of Beatrice and Otho, in the year 1209, had, however, brought to the latter all the advantages of her dower of three hundred and fifty castles, and the rich territorial domains of the house of Swabia, of which he took instant possession, setting aside entirely the rights of Frederick, the King of Sicily.

Favoured by the warmest support of the clergy, the claims of Otho met with unexpected success, even in quarters hitherto favourable to the line of Swabia. On the 22nd of September, 1208, an assembly at Armstad unanimously proclaimed him King of the Romans ; even the Archbishop of Magdeburg, who had always voted for the Ghibellines, now gave his assent to the Guelphs. This decision was ratified at a general diet held on the day of St. Martin (November 11th), at Frankfort. In this diet, the most numerous on record, it was decreed that, to avoid rebellions and their consequences, the election of German sovereigns was to be in future placed in the hands of six of the great feudatories, three lay and three ecclesiastic. The latter were the Archbishops of Cologne, Mayence, and Trêves ; the former, the Duke of Saxony, the Marquis of Brandenburg, and the Count Palatine of the Rhine. In case of votes being equal, the King of Bohemia was to have the casting vote. By this law, the hereditary succession of the dignity of king became impossible.

Germany was at that time in a state of complete anarchy ; ten years of lawlessness had injured commerce to an unprecedented degree. Freebooters and marauders from every country, either as partisans of rival nobles or on their own account, plundered homesteads, and levied requisitions on towns as far as they dared to venture ; and even after the nominal consolidation of the rival

parties, Otho did not succeed for many years in restoring order, law, and confidence between man and man.

Otho, now sure of his throne, soon began to show a determination to resume his feudal rights in Italy—hitherto left in abeyance—and his very first steps aroused the alarm and anger of Innocent III.; for he named the son of the detested Markwald (expelled from Sicily by Constance) to be his “Regent,” or Curator, in Romagna; an act of utter falsehood and ingratitude to the Pope, which caused a great revolution of opinion against him, and the Ghibelline party, hitherto quiescent, seemed at once to remember the existence of young Frederick of Hohenstauffen.

Otho, who could not long remain in ignorance of the designs of this powerful party, refrained from throwing off the mask of friendship for Rome, and appealed to Innocent for aid.

Innocent was ever to be propitiated by the offer of being taken as arbiter in the disputes of political parties. He returned a courteous reply: “That though the guardian of the young Frederick, and of his Italian inheritance, he was nevertheless disposed to aid Otho in all other emergencies, counting on his ‘gratitude and help.’”

Fresh intrigues, however, soon began to lure Otho, like all other German sovereigns, with the hope of reigning over at least some part of Italy. The feudal barons of the Kingdom of Sicily, who were chiefly of foreign origin, had never submitted thoroughly, or with a good grace, to the regency of Innocent III.; any power that controlled their rapine and resisted their oppressions seemed to them intolerable, and the wise and politic matrimonial alliance which Innocent negotiated for the young King with Constance, daughter of Peter and sister of Alfonse of Arragon, widow of the King of Hungary, caused them great and just dissatisfaction, for the Princess brought with her a powerful body of trained and practised troops—a significant indication of the inten-

tions of the Courts of Rome and Arragon against feudal revolts.

The disaffected barons therefore invited Otho into the Kingdom of Naples ; and the latter, under pretext of receiving the crown at Rome from the Pope, crossed the Alps ; and, after an interval of twelve years, the north of Italy once more saw the Imperial banners. Commerce, manufactures, and learning had made great progress during that time ; but the higher national feelings developed in the league of Pontida seemed for the moment erased from recollection.

All the fury and, we must add, the folly, of intestinal jealousies, factions, feuds, and rivalries were not only alive again in Italy, but, as it were, conducted on a more mature system, as if persecutions and private feuds were to grow in intensity with the increasing education of the people. Materially flourishing, the most wealthy cities, on the merest excuses, would rise in tumult, and slay or exile, without any form of trial, such of their citizens as the caprice of the moment exposed to their wrath. The most careful consideration of the records left to us cannot give us any clue to the feelings that guided these frantic mobs. It is quite certain many citizens were slain or ruined and exiled for virtues rather than for crimes ; and that superior wealth and beneficence proved but too often the ruin of their possessors. The result was that fully one-third of the citizens of every city were exiles to other cities ; and that numbers of Italians (happily certainly for civilization) were driven beyond the Alps, and carried with them the books and traditions and the technical appliances of many valuable arts. Many founded families, the descendants of which survive, and bear still the same arms as their ancestors.

The rival factions of "Guelphs" and "Ghibellines" had crossed the Alps, even retaining their names. Vincenza, Ferrara, and Padua, all very flourishing cities of that date (1209), were distracted and ensanguined by their brawls. Some cities had selected a lord or chief. Ferrara had voluntarily submitted to Azzo d'Este, the Guelph.

But soon after, Salinguerra, head of the Ghibelline faction, entered the place by surprise, and, as usual, slew or exiled the more dangerous partisans of the other side.

All the chiefs of the factions met in the presence of Otho of Brunswick; and yet, such was their mutual exasperation that even the ceremonial of a Court could scarcely restrain them from open violence to one another. Otho behaved, according to the accounts that remain, with apparent courtesy and impartiality, and caused an assembly of barons to be held at Bologna. He there received homage, and also the tribute lawfully due to him; and took possession of the greater part of the "Donation of the Countess Matilda," in the name of the Holy See (in conformity with the treaty made by his perfidious father with Rome). He then pushed on to Viterbo, where he met Innocent III. with every profession of friendship and reverence, assuring him that, immediately after his coronation, he would restore to him the entire patrimony of St. Peter in its integrity. As, however, he evaded binding himself by writing to the performance of this promise, even a less able man than Innocent would have penetrated the intended treachery. It was, however, too late to retract then; and Otho and his army and partisans encamped on Monte Malo (or Mario, as it is now called), near Rome. But the Roman senator, a few of the cardinals, and a great proportion of the people, showed extreme objections to the coronation, and the ceremony was therefore performed in the Leonine city, 4th of October, 1204, in the presence of a vast crowd of adherents of the Imperial cause. The rest of the city had been (as we remember on former occasions) separated by powerful barricades from the Leonine.

Otho went through his part of the Roman ritual with the most accomplished appearance of humility; it is not possible but that the penetrating eye of Innocent should have suspected the sincerity of a bold warrior, who offered not one objection to the puerile humiliations designedly imposed on him by the childish arrogance of the Middle

Agas, and which even then at times roused the indignation of men of robust and manly feeling. Otho bore the pastoral staff of the Pope, and, all crowned as he was, accompanied him as far as the tomb of Hadrian, where he bade him a farewell of ostentatious humility and reverence.

This interview was their last, for, though Otho sought another the very next day, alleging he wished the Pope's "authority" on some point of controversy, the latter, fearing a hidden plot, declined to receive him. A bloody brawl immediately followed, the Imperialists being the aggressors, for they tried by force to enter the city, barricaded against them on purpose to preserve the peace, and they were met with a determined and sanguinary repulse.

Otho, greatly irritated, or affecting to be so, now impudently threw off the shallow mask he had worn, and flatly refused the restitution of the Countess Matilda's territories.

"Know ye," he said to the Papal Commissioners (sent to receive the promised domains), "that an anterior oath,¹ taken in Germany after our election, obliges us not only to maintain in their integrity the actual possessions and rights of the Empire, but it engages us to reassert all such as have been wrested from our predecessors against all justice and right."

As may be well believed, the unblushing perfidy of Otho brought on him the fullest measure of the indignation of the injured Pontiff, and thus the fortunes of the young Frederick were furthered unintentionally by the son of the perfidious kinsman who had so materially injured those of his grandfather, Frederick I. For Innocent, perceiving what he had to expect from Otho, immediately turned his eyes to his own ward, and strove to aid his Ghibelline followers as strenuously as he had hitherto opposed them.

¹ At Aix-la-Chapelle the Archbishop of Cologne had addressed the King of the Romans in these words, "*Vis jure regni et imperii bona ejusdem injuste dispersa conservare et recuperare?*" To which he had answered, "*Volo.*" Ordo. Coronationis, ap. Pietz. T. iv., p. 384.

But the memory of Henry VI., surnamed the "Cruel," was yet too fresh in Italy to enable even Innocent to propose immediately a son of his, and a grandson of Barbarossa, as Emperor. Not only did the cities of Northern and Central Italy—Milan, Brescia, Bologna, and many more, decide in favour of Otho, but, even in the Southern Provinces, Naples, Aversa, and several others opened their gates to his agents, and volunteered their homage; whilst many of the feudal barons, and even of the Saracenic auxiliaries, joined the Imperialists.

The Pope, who had already launched an anathema (richly deserved) against Otho, now repeated the excommunication in the most solemn manner. He extended the interdict under which the sovereign himself was placed to all the cities and communities which dared to give him shelter.

Innocent III., justly aggrieved, devoted the entire energy of his great mind, and the resources of his vast temporal power, to destroy the power of Otho, which he had so greatly contributed to create. So sudden a change, even under the provocation which Otho had given him by his falsehood, took the world by surprise. The bishops and high ecclesiastics of the Kingdom of Naples having applied for "instructions" as to the mode of carrying out the interdict in their dioceses and cities received the following answer: "Doubtless the Neapolitans are to be deprived of every sacrament except baptism, the churches are to be closed, the dead are to be deprived of Christian burial, unless before expiring they have withdrawn their oath of allegiance to the Emperor."¹

There is a sweeping and unsparing severity in the orders of Innocent, passing innocent and guilty, as it were, under the same spiritual execution, which marks the strongly Hebrew cast of the Pontiff's legislative "spirituality." And yet even at that date Bologna, the seat of learning, and the focus of intellectual research, valiantly defied Papal mandates and interdicts, and was

¹ Junii 1211. Epistl. Innocent. III., lib. xiv., p. 74, 538.

threatened in consequence with the "abolition of its universities and schools."

Having launched his spiritual thunders, Innocent III. began a most active series of negotiations with the nobles and barons who, greatly at his instigation, had but shortly before agreed in electing Otho. He justified his participation in it by pleading his ignorance of that prince's real nature; he declares him deposed, in virtue of his being "under the ban of the Church"; he warns them of the dangers to morality, and to the country generally, if such a man be permitted to retain the sceptre. He then goes on to say: "Before striking him, and previous to absolving his subjects from their oaths of fealty, we have offered to submit his failings and defaults to the arbitration of such as might be chosen by us through common accord; this he has refused.¹ Take provident measures, therefore, whilst there is yet time. We order and enjoin you, as you value the remission of your sins, to build a margin against these evils. Know ye that, whatsoever ensues, we are purposed to lend a firm and efficient help to all such as are disposed to follow our counsels, and obey our commands."

The zeal and activity of Innocent were not without effect in Germany; he softened away scruples, soothed consciences, absolved from oaths, loosed from private obligations; he gratified avarice, roused ambition, and pleased revengeful hopes. Thus, whilst Otho's cause was far from unpopular in Italy, opposition was already darkening in the North. And Sigilfred, Archbishop of Mayence, elected by the personal influence of Otho, copied his master's example of perfidy, and declared openly against him. At a diet at Bamberg the Archbishop cancelled the oaths of the great feudatories, in the name of the Church, forbade them to give Otho the title of Emperor, and pointing to young Frederick of Swabia, recommended him as a worthy heir to the throne.

But recently the same ecclesiastical influence had

¹ "Coram arbitris communiter eligendis." Extracts and notices from MSS. in the Paris Library, T. ii., p. 284.

overruled many prelates, and many nobles secretly inclined to Frederick, in favour of Otho; and the suddenness of the change at first rather bewildered the slow-witted and simple-minded Germans; however, after some hesitation, those whose feelings had always been in his favour expressed them aloud, and the many nobles, whom the significant promises in the Papal epistle struck forcibly, hastened to declare for the Hohenstauffens. The King of Bohemia wished for a divorce, and hoped to obtain one, and he gave his vote for Frederick. The Duke of Austria and the Landgrave of Thuringia were the great feudatories who openly seceded; their defection proved the signal of civil war. The Guelphs and Ghibellines once more appeared in arms; the former party, from lower Germany, devastated remorselessly the territories of the perfidious Sigilfred, Archbishop of Mayence. On the other hand, a Diet of Nuremberg produced a catalogue of accusations against Otho, of the most extensive nature. Some of the accusations were true; we have seen his faithlessness, and his morals were unquestionably not those of the cloister; but the most ludicrous frivolities were also urged against him. Many members of the Diet also conveniently remembered obligations they owed to the line of Swabia; and after some contention the Ghibellines carried the day, pronounced the deposition of Otho IV., and elected Frederick of Sicily to the German throne.¹

Messengers were directly despatched to Frederick, then at Palermo, inviting him to take possession of his new dignity; and after a slight hesitation, as if his own success had rather startled him by its rapidity, the Pope permitted these messengers to pursue their way to Sicily.

Innocent promised the youthful sovereign his aid in subduing the opposition of the Guelph barons still adverse to his election. Consequently, in spite of the tears of his wife, Constance of Arragon, Frederick lent a joyful assent to the heralds who hailed him the "King of the Romans." Constance represented the turbulent and unsettled state

¹ *Chronicon. Fossæ novæ*, p. 892.

of their kingdom, and the dangers and difficulties of a foreign empire ; but Frederick, after causing their infant son (two years old) to be crowned at Palermo, started, full of hope, to secure the glorious prize offered to him, and left Constance Regent in his absence. At Messina he entered into the formal negotiations exacted by Innocent III. in return for the benefits he had conferred upon him. Frederick wrote a letter to the Pope, obliging himself to tender personal homage to him for the kingdom of Sicily ; he also bound himself to maintain the liberty of ecclesiastical elections, and to pay with due precision the tribute of six hundred *schifati* as tribute for the kingdom aforesaid.

Innocent, however, still refused to see him until he had bound himself by the most solemn promises of submission to his will in every respect, and under all circumstances. As such promises cancel themselves by the impossibility of their performance, and as a man of the genius and practical knowledge of Innocent could not but, be aware of this it must be presumed that by laying impossible burdens on the young Frederick he had already contemplated some future scheme of enmity against him ; but, for the moment satisfied by his acquiescence to all his demands, he granted him at last an audience in Rome, where he met with a clamorous and splendid welcome.¹ Perhaps the extreme youth of the Sovereign, and the recollection of all that he "owed to Rome," may have caused some hopes of his "sincerity" to rest in the mind of Innocent ; perhaps, also, the inexperience of Frederick may have led him to engage himself further than he was aware of. Perhaps the absence of any other candidate to oppose, with the slightest chance of success, to Otho, may have caused Innocent to stifle misgivings. At all events, after having imposed on Frederick oaths of the most servile and blind submission, he treated him with splendid hospitality, and advanced him a great sum of money to aid his progress into Germany, in addition to the twelve thousand and eight hundred ounces

¹ 1212, February, *Annales Ecclesiasticæ*, §. ii.

of gold ¹ he had already disbursed during the minority of Frederick in pacifying and improving his Kingdom of Sicily.

Frederick also covenanted, "under no possible pretext, to unite the Kingdom of Sicily to the Empire." He would, he said, "cede it to his son, as soon as he had himself received the crown of Charlemagne at Rome from the hands of the Pope."

Frederick also trusted, and with reason, to the aid of Philip Augustus, King of France, in his enterprise; for Philip naturally longed to lower the pride and power of Richard Cœur de Lion, the uncle of Otho; and he warmly espoused the interests of the Ghibelline party, sending Frederick twenty thousand marks to help him in winning partisans.

The reception of the latter in Germany was not, ¹ on the whole, unfavourable, though the Guelph party, suddenly roused from fancied security, opposed some resistance to his progress. A diet was held at Frankfort, December 5, 1212, at which his title, King of Germany, was confirmed; and the Sunday following he was crowned at Mayence, in presence of above 5000 nobles, the Papal nuncio, and a French envoy.

On this occasion the young King behaved with an affability, generosity, and tact that contrasted favourably with the blunt manners and the illiberality of the parsimonious and overbearing Otho; for, on being asked by his treasurer, the Bishop of Spire and Worms, "Where the subsidy of Philip Augustus was to be placed," he answered, "*In the purses of my friends.*" ²

Innocent III., having once given his assent (though after much hesitation and under strong reserves) to the elevation of Frederick, afforded him all the resources of his spiritual arsenal. All Otho's adherents, "to the left and to the right," were indiscriminately excommunicated, as well as all who should accept or hold lands or castles from him.

The popularity of Frederick I. in Germany, aided by the political feuds of the two rival parties, the personal

¹ 757=440 frs. of our money. ; ² Chron. Erphord. p. 241. B.

influence of the young Frederick, and the interests of hundreds of thousands of weak or cold subjects of Otho, thus reinforced by the most ardent support of Rome, and by the alliance of France, produced a great and visible effect in Germany.

Otho was not, however, disposed to yield his crown without a fight. He had been enjoying the repose of his unexpected welcome in Northern Italy, when the tidings of the rival whom the Pope had raised against him reached him; he instantly returned to Germany to dispute with him the crown. Otho, putting aside the recollection of his own servility to Innocent, and the fact that to him he had owed his own crown, affected to designate Frederick, whose stature did not equal his own, as the "dwarf of Apulia," and the "king of the priests." He encouraged the reports of the "supposititious infant" that had been placed in the cradle when Frederick was alleged to have been born. His youth and inexperience were, however, more reasonable grounds for disregarding his pretensions. Otho now gathered partisans to his cause on all sides, and soon found himself at the head of a powerful league that met at Valenciennes.

In the absence of the actual sovereigns, the principal European potentates were represented as follows: the King of England,² Henry Duke of Brabant, the Duke of Leimberg, Theobald, the new Duke of Lorraine, Henry, the Count Palatine. Ferrando, Count of Flanders and Hainault, the Counts of Bologna, Nevers, Auxerre, Ugo de Boves, the renowned chief of the Portulani, and a great many nobles from France, the Low Countries, and Germany, came over to the assembly, and took an eager and prominent part in this league, less out of love for Otho than in the hope of thwarting Philip Augustus, the dreaded sovereign of France, and the power of Rome, by defeating their candidate for the Empire. Otho spoke himself at this assembly with great vehemence and success, for he addressed himself to the party passions which had prompted the meeting, and

¹ Pfaffen-Koenig.

² 1213.

promised largely the reward of allegiance out of the provinces which he hoped were to be riven from France, in case of success.

At this juncture, John of England, who had been excommunicated, now made peace with the Pope, agreeing to do him homage for his Kingdom of England, and to pay him a yearly tribute of a thousand marks sterling. On this, Innocent, who had been hotly urging on Philip Augustus to the conquest of England, suddenly turned round, and with equal warmth forbade the attempt. Though a devoted son of the Church, when such devotion gratified his ambition, Philip Augustus could not agree that the submission of John to a third power smoothed the offences which he had put forth as reasons for declaring war on him, and thus refused obedience to the Papal command. In consequence of this, many of the great vassals seized so good a pretext to cool in a cause which they had indeed never embraced with much warmth.

War was formally declared in February, 1214, against John of England, and hostilities commenced in Maine and Anjou. He had calculated on an insurrection of the provinces beyond the Loire, the incorporation of which in the monarchy of France had caused him violent anger. Philip Augustus sent his son Louis, with a chosen body of the most, valiant knights, to keep John in check; and this the Prince did so successfully that the English King was about to retire into Gascony, when the report of the forward march of Otho IV. attracted all eyes to the north of France.

The celebrated battle of Bovines, in which Philip Augustus, after a desperate fight, and after undergoing the utmost personal danger, completely routed Otho IV., and took most of the great Guelphs prisoners, belongs more particularly to the history of France, with all its brilliant and romantic episodes; besides the well-known "douze alérions," or twelve eaglets, of the Montmorency, many other French nobles date their arms from that glorious day. Otho behaved with indomitable for-

itude ; and many of his partisans emulated the gallantry of the Paladins of Charlemagne, whilst following their leader into the thickest of the fight. But the science and steady gallantry of the French overmastered the disorderly hosts of the Guelphs ; and the victory is still considered as one of the most important to France. Philip Augustus endowed a monastery with great wealth at Senlis, in honour of this overwhelming victory ; and (as the Black Prince had not yet been born, to teach the milder graces of courtesy to the vanquished) all the prisoners of note were ignominiously bound by the same cords they had provided for the captives they had hoped to make.

After this utter defeat, Otho IV. lost all shadow of power. He was, of course, deserted on all hands ; and on the 24th of June, 1215, Frederick made a triumphal entry into Aix-la-Chapelle, and there received the " silver crown " of Germany, as the avowed nominee of France and of Rome. Next day he was consecrated, in due form, in the Church of the Holy Virgin.

The See of Cologne being vacant, he was not crowned in the royal chapel, as usual with his predecessors ; but he assisted at mass, seated on the throne of Charlemagne, a chair or seat of unpolished marble, which had been removed from the tomb of the great Emperor by order of Frederick Barbarossa, after having been buried since 814. The Papal legate, the Archbishop of Mayence, sat on one side, and the Archbishop of Trèves on the other. After the ceremonies of mass and of the litanies had been performed, a series of questions were put, and answers made, in Latin.

The Archbishop then asked the assembled multitude if they freely accepted Frederick as Sovereign, and were willing to pledge him their fealty. They assented with ready cries. Frederick was then anointed with holy oil, with which his forehead, arms, and shoulders were touched ; his feet were placed in the pure white royal sandals ; a stole, shaped as a cross, was hung round his neck ; the sword of state, ring of office, mantle of

royalty, sceptre and globe, were alternately consigned into his hands. The three archbishops placed the silver crown of Germany on his brow, and, with his hands folded on the altar, he pronounced, in Latin and in German, the royal oath :

“ I promise, in the presence of God and His angels, to protect churches and sanctuaries, to govern peoples with equity and justice ; to maintain the laws of the state, taking counsel from my princes and from my ‘ fedeli ; ’ to render all due honours to the Sovereign Pontiff and to the Holy See, to all prelates, and to all churches. I promise to maintain to them inviolable all such gifts and endowments as have been made over to them by virtue of my predecessors. I shall maintain the same policy with regard to the great vassals of the realm. Thus may our Lord Jesus Christ lend me strength and support throughout, and sustain me in my need. Amen.”

The coronation of Frederick was immediately followed by an impassioned sermon in favour of a fresh Crusade. And thus the most complete success attended the Ghibelline cause, and the arms of its supporters, the King of France and the Pope.

Frederick II. was about nineteen years of age when he was thus enabled to seat himself on the German throne, and he already gave the promise of possessing the brilliant qualities and the ungovernable defects of the Hohenstauffens.

Teutonic courage and Norman chivalry were warmed by Sicilian suns into the glow of enthusiasm and fire of genius in his veins. From Rome he had learnt the policy of legislature, the calm of deliberation, the dignity and beauty of the study of the classics. His accomplishments comprised all the arts then known. His manner and address are allowed to have been fascinating. Ambition was the only predominant passion of his life. Every other was followed and forsaken as the caprice of the moment dictated. He was short in stature (like many other great men), but bore himself

with imperial ease and dignity, and was remarkable for deep-set and penetrating eyes. Frederick was an accomplished linguist ; he even understood the Arabian tongue, which he spoke with grace and fluency ; and influenced, no doubt, by the fashion of the day, he had studied its literature and song.

The early force of education, and the vicissitudes of his chequered youth, had early taught him the prudence and the necessity of self-control, and of observing secrecy as to his own political aims. His earlier years were, indeed, passed in the best training, under the able counsellors whom Innocent III. placed around him, and the administrative merits of whom he so profoundly recognised as to follow in every respect ; thus raising his fertile and lovely Sicilian kingdom to a pitch of wealth and prosperity it never afterwards preserved.

In early youth he was certainly disposed to be gentle and generous. His personal influence was very great on his surroundings throughout his life. His liberality was princely ; but the very steps which he had seen taken to achieve his own triumph were sufficient to pervert the human heart ; and a far less acute observer could not but feel that the passions of Philip Augustus and of Innocent, and not their acknowledgment of his claims, had prompted their union against Otho.

In after times, the caprice and cruelty of the "tyrant" alternated with the wisdom and policy of the "sage" and the "philosopher" in the conduct of Frederick. It was not, however, that his criminal actions were in themselves darker than those of his contemporaries, but that the lustre of his genius, and the interest he creates in spite of them, makes them, perhaps, more inexplicable to us. Frederick II. seems, in so many things, so nearly approaching our own age—in his wise toleration, his judicious thrift, his feeling for literature, for the encouragement of the useful arts, for the majesty of the ancients, and in his laws for the future—that we feel it the more heinous of him to stoop to the barbarities of his own times, when his interests or passions gave him cause.

He was versed in all that literary culture could teach him. He also took much delight in natural history, a rare taste at that period; foreign plants, birds, animals were brought to adorn his gardens and parks. Unfortunately we cannot conceal that his pleasures were not always equally harmless or enlightened. Yet it may be urged, in extenuation of these, that they were never suffered to interfere with his sterner duties. He loved to surround himself by men the most able of his day, and to hear their conversation—a sure mark of very lofty intelligence, and of a sincere feeling of reverence for science. In the following pages it will be our endeavour to show with impartiality the great blame, but still the far greater glory, that must ever rest on the most brilliant and interesting of the Hohenstauffens.

The coronation of Frederick II., and the sermon in favour of a fresh Crusade, when the young King *took the cross* and oath to follow it (which oath was subsequently to be used so vehemently against him by Innocent), opened the first ring to a series of events which brought about the most serious consequences. It must be particularly borne in mind that the coronation was followed in the same year, 11th November, 1215, by a general or Ecumenical Council, called together at Rome, and the first session was opened in the Basilica of St. John Lateran. The questions to be discussed were important:—the discipline of the Church; the league contemplated among European nations to ward off dangers from Asia; the extirpation of heresy amongst the Christian brethren; the deposition of Otho, to be made infamous by ceremonies as public as his coronation had been.

Innocent III., after taking his seat on the Papal throne, and joining an invocation to the Holy Spirit, blessed the Fathers of the Church, who were seated in a circle round him, whilst their inferiors in condition were placed less prominently around them behind, forming wider concentric circles. A throne or altar on which the Gospels were laid was placed amidst them, in front of the Pope. The ambassadors of Frederick, King of Ger-

many, of the Kings of France and of England, of the Latin Emperor, of Constantinople, of Hungary, of Arragon, of Sicily, of Cyprus, and of Jerusalem, besides those of many inferior princes, also attended this Council. The patriarchs of Constantinople and of Jerusalem, with the right of suffrage, appeared, and the delegates of Antioch and Alexandria, seventy-one archbishops, four hundred and twelve bishops, eighty abbots or priors, altogether making the extraordinary number of two thousand two hundred and eighty-three prelates.

After a Latin oration, the Pope opened the Council with the following remarkable words: "*Desiderio desideravi hoc Pascha manducare vobiscum antequam moriar.*" "I hunger with the desire to partake of the Pascal feast with you before coming unto death." (Gospel of S. Luke, chap. xxii. v. 15.)

Innocent then gave out the order of the subjects to be secretly deliberated on; the votes were afterwards to be gathered by public scrutiny. Two of these solemn assemblies were held on the 20th and 30th of September, the last being the closing session. Seventy ecclesiastical canons were promulgated, and the greater part of the ordinances and laws of discipline, which have ruled the Church ever since, were published on this momentous occasion.

This council is, therefore, of the highest historical importance, and the study of its acts will fully explain the spiritual thunders launched against Frederick II. when he openly attempted to contravene its enactments.

All Jews and Saracens were to be expelled from public offices, and were declared incompetent to hold any in future, and were to be distinguished from Christians by a particular dress. The practice of usury was to be punishable by law. The Paterini or Albigenses were to be severely punished for heresy. The outward forms of devotion, hitherto only compulsory on the clergy, were imposed upon the laity likewise. Every member of the Church, besides the sacraments of baptism and confirmation, was compelled to receive the eucharist at

least (*ad minimum*) once a year, at Easter, within the parish in which he resided, under pain of being expelled from the community, and deprived of Christian burial in consecrated ground.

The plan of the new Crusade, which had been preached at the coronation of Frederick, and to which he had pledged his presence, was discussed at great length. But the affairs of the Empire, the lawfulness of the deposition of Otho IV., and of the succession of Frederick of Hohenstauffen, were more particularly insisted upon. After the loss of the battle of Bovines it required no great skill to foretell that Otho's cause found but few supporters; and Frederick was exalted as the favoured of Rome, whilst his defeated rival was left to wither under the curses of the Pope. During the sittings of the council the formula under which each new clause had been worded was read out aloud, and the votes of those present were afterwards collected, from that of the Pontiff down to the very humblest ecclesiastic. An ecclesiastical notary committed the result to paper, making known each time the favourable vote. Finally, it was ruled that for four consecutive years the princes and people of Europe should keep the peace, whilst all contravention of this law should be punished by anathema and sequestration of property.

Although the Council passed the above decree, circumstances were far too strong against it to enable it to be carried into execution. A dim and uneasy prescience of the imprescriptible rights of man was even then dawning, and defied anathema and persecution. Princes were also everywhere bent on establishing the principle of hereditary succession, and thus annihilating the right of election, a right which was indeed fruitful of anarchy and rebellion, but which brought vast wealth and power amongst the electors, and left the hope of still greater alive amongst the chief feudatories.

All the genius of Frederick failed to cope with the rising civil rights and liberties of Italy, fostered by the acute policy of Innocent III., who never appears to have

been thoroughly satisfied of the submission of a Hohenstauffen, and to have exulted rather too imperiously over the downfall of Othó and the substitution of his nominee. But it was not only in the comparatively polished, thoughtful, and lettered Peninsula that the voice of "man's rights" was heard. The year 1215 is known, not more by the acts of Innocent III.'s important council than by one other, of which the prophetic genius of the great Pontiff intuitively perceived the importance, and which, not less than his own action, was destined to influence the lives of mankind.

Not in the august and sacred halls of the Lateran was this great deed signed; on a soft green meadow, by a bright and placid river, and beneath the open sky, the barons of England extorted from the feeble and tyrannical John the "Magna Charta."

John immediately appealed to Rome for absolution from his oath; an absolution not simply granted, but, as it were, enforced and invigorated by a peremptory prohibition of its fulfilment.

The Pope, who in Italy and in Germany instigated rebellion against the Empire by spiritual no less than by temporal rewards, opened the volume of his curses with the most energetic alacrity against the bold barons of England.

The raging and self-idolatrous despotism which has ever been the rock on which Italian genius has struck, from Hildebrand downwards, prompted the answer of Innocent, an answer which, read by the light of the future, deserves to be committed to memory.

"In the name of the Omnipotent God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, through the authority of the Apostles Peter and Paul, which we at this present possess, through the advice of the cardinals our brethren, we condemn this Charter;¹ we forbid the King, under penalty of anathema, from standing by and accomplishing its enactments, and prohibit the nobles from claiming its enactment or observance. We moreover annul

¹ The Charter ought to be read in its significant integrity to enable this sentence to be fully understood.

the reciprocal engagements and obligations entered on, declare null the securities given (*cauzioni*), and command that the said Charter shall be considered in future as null and void."

The folly, as well as the stormy and furious childishness, of this curse on the great Charter of England, was paralleled about four hundred years later, when Galileo discovered the motion of the earth. To this day it remains a problem how the genius, learning, and administrative capacity of Innocent III. should have been guilty of it. Perhaps it is denied to genius triumphant over the past to read the future; perhaps Innocent *may* have fully understood all that the Charter might bring forth, as Wolsey prophesied, not the religious, but the political fruits of the Reformation; perhaps it was merely the spasmodic fury of despotism at seeing its tool, John of England, bound by other laws than those of Rome; but those outbursts of frantic folly on temporal policy, which are perfectly intelligible in the peasant monk Hildebrand, become grave errors in the noble, the accomplished, the learned, the experienced Innocent. Intoxicated by his triumph in Germany, he does not seem to have paused to weigh the fact that his power had been chiefly successful because obedience to him suited the passions, the interests, and the covetousness of a great preponderance of the natives of that country. But when launched against the determined and dauntless barons of England, his spiritual curses were not only wasted, but remain to this day a proof how a nation can defy priestly despotism if it has the manhood to stand by its rights.

From the provisions of the "Magna Charta" have sprung directly all those civil laws which are now allowed to form the basis of all national polity. State after state, from the most tried and apparently secure despotism, has risen to demand the same fundamental civil rights. Even in our own days, and at this very moment, what is the syllabus but a virtual repetition of the curses of Innocent III. on the civil rights of man?

¹ 25 Sep. 1215. Rymer. Acta, pub. T. i., p. 135.

The influence of Rome was ineffectual against the sturdy barons of England; but it must now be shown in full force, as it swayed the contending factions of Germany.

The battle of Bouvines annihilated the power of Otho of Brunswick; his very existence was hardly remembered; he attempted in vain a reconciliation with Rome. The Pope, who could not but be conscious of the insincerity of all professions of obedience, cannot be censured for exacting, as a preliminary to all negotiations, that Otho should agree to the edict of the Ecumenical Council, which had declared his election null. Otho was equally obstinate; some sense of dignity seems to have been left to him; he was ready to do penance for his sins, but he refused to let his Imperial election be disallowed. He was therefore cut off from the communion of the Church; and, forgotten by mankind, resided in his petty hereditary domains in utter seclusion and forsaken by all; the ecclesiastical interdict forming, as we have seen, a satisfactory reason to the consciences of those who could get nothing from him to avoid him, and his own party having been dismembered at Bovines, where most of the Guelph lords were made prisoners, and held to ruinous pledges for ransom.

As befell Henry III. under parallel circumstances at Worms, Otho now had a severe illness, which bore every appearance of being fatal; and the terrors of conscience awoke, as the glory and gain of this world receded from his dying eyes. The Prior of Albertstadt was hurriedly sought for, and he received the humbled monarch's full and penitential confession, made on bended knees, with hands clasped on the relics of St. Simon and Jude (objects of Otho's great veneration, which he had brought with him from Brunswick). Otho, with all the humility of hopelessness, swore that if his life were spared he would in future conform strictly to the dictates and rule of the Church, save on one point,¹ the abandonment of his Imperial right, to which he had, he said, been

¹ "Salvo tamen meo imperio, ad quod canonice sum electus." Martene, &c.

elected with regular canonical forms which could not be reversed.

Having taken all possible oaths, and bound himself by all possible securities to become the vassal of Rome, the dying Emperor received absolution; but this he said was not enough; he had been a great sinner, and would make an expiation in conformity to his crimes. He caused a select body of nobles to be summoned, and ten ecclesiastics, headed by the Bishop of Hildesheim, to be present at his confession, recantation, and penitence. In their presence he renewed aloud his declarations of complete subserviency to Rome, and bewailed his sins; he then pointed to a cross on his bosom (he had received it from the Bishop of Camerino), and declared he wore it with a vow to lead to Palestine a Crusade which should be worthy of the great Empire he had ruled. "However," he added—and the excuse was admitted as valid in the thirteenth century—"the Devil, until this hour, has opposed himself to the execution of this design."

The Empress, Maria of Brabant (who had shared his fallen fortunes, though neglected in his prosperity), took the cross from his neck, and gave it to the Abbot of Walkenried, who enjoined him to wear it externally, after the manner of the Crusaders, as a public token of his good faith.

The final scene of expiation then followed. Otho threw himself on a rug by the side of his bed of death, bared his shoulders, and invited the lash from all the bystanders, even to the meanest scullion.¹

During the pauses, from inevitable fatigue, in the performance of this frightful and brutal tragedy, alternate verses of the *Miserere Mei Deus* were sung; and the faint voice of the expiring Emperor was heard to whisper, "Strike harder! Spare not an obstinate sinner! Lash hard."

Thus, in the vigour of manhood, at the age of forty-three, expired Otho of Brunswick, on the 19th May,

¹ Compunctus ita fuit ut coquinariis suis præciperet ut in collum suum conculcarent. Albertus Stadensis. (Chron. p. 204.)

1218. He had been King of Rome during twenty years, and Emperor (counting from the date of his coronation at Rome) eight years and seven months. Great and deserved were the rejoicings at Rome over this conspicuous spiritual triumph.

The death of Otho did not materially affect the peace of Germany. His obscure and almost obliterated life ever since the battle of Bovines made the strange and sanguinary humiliations of his voluntary penitence and death, religious rather than political acts. But in England the barons were at open and serious war with John and the Pope; and in Provence raged the conflict between the Count of Toulouse and Simon de Montfort, which is known as the "War of the Albigenses," from the atrocities (even great for a bloodthirsty age) which marked it.

In Italy Otho had never been unpopular, and after his death the fear and distrust of the line of Hohenstauffen burst out afresh in another powerful Guelph league; and the son even of the great Ghibelline lord, the Marquis of Este, joined the confederation of the Guelphs of Milan, on succeeding to his father, under the name of Azzo VII.

Florence, which had hitherto been quietly extending her territory and her commerce, now came on the scene, distracted by factions, and well fitted for every chance of war. Forty-three of her wealthiest families enrolled themselves as Guelphs; and, with occasional intervals, this party remained dominant throughout her history. But opposed to them, were twenty-four Ghibelline houses, their followers and "Consorti;" and though numerically but half the number of their foes, the Ghibellines were formidable from their more warlike habits and military discipline, from their great territorial possessions, and from the solidarity which existed between them and the semi-independent Ghibelline lords of Umbria, and of the Lunigiana. It is a remarkable proof of the tenacity of a faction that never can be called victorious, but which never quite lost the sympathies of the common people,

¹ Ricordano Malaspini, *Storia Fiorentina*, T. viii., c. 105, p. 940.

that to this day all the traditions of the country in Italy are Ghibelline. In Romagna, in the Pisano, and in the Lucchese, excepting with regard to the *personality* of the great Countess Matilda, all the legends and tales of old castles and passes are in favour of the nobler and more chivalrous though defeated faction. With a kind of pensive triumph, the Lucchese peasant will tell you: "By this path came the Ghibellines from the Lunugiana;" "In this castle Ugolino della Gherardesca dreamed his dream." Even in the Pistoiese hills, the ways to the territories of Uguccione della Faggiuola are pointed out, and the arms of the Montefeltro are eagerly shown at Pisa.

Genoa and this latter city were also in the first part of the thirteenth century at angry feud for the privilege of carrying the Crusaders to the East on their galleys, a lucrative monopoly, which ensured to the fortunate competitor the preponderating share of the gains of Eastern commerce, besides the powerful protection of the Christian warriors.

In order to pacify these animosities, and soothe all discords by the authority of his presence, the indefatigable Pontiff, Innocent, set out, notwithstanding the heat of summer, for Genoa. He passed by Perugia, where he was suddenly struck with fever and paralysis of the brain; and, at the early age of fifty-five years, closed his memorable career on the 17th of July, 1216.

Innocent III. had the glory of framing the policy which may be said to have preponderated in Western Europe, in spite of all opposition, for four hundred years, and the arid dogmas of which are being invoked even in our own day under a civil law and organisation of society utterly at variance from that of the Middle Ages. Like the wisest of all human codes, that of Rome had the sole defect of not recognising its own limitations of power. It seems fated for the genius of Italy to stop short within one point of completeness in sagacity: it fails in observing, from the history of the past, that "time" is but another word for "change;" and when every country, even those assumed most repugnant to the new forms of

society, is reforming itself, Rome is the only government that obstinately refuses to look forward, and to adopt even in its own assemblies that freedom of opinion which is now recognised even in Austria, which was but a few years ago the most sluggish and obstinate of all Courts.

In the year 1216 civil power was non-existent ; the lives and fortunes of men depended upon every cause except that of common rights and uniform justice, and the Italian, or Church power, was emphatically that of "civilization ;" even its abuses promoted the cause of progress, by awakening a series of mental and moral faculties lying dormant, and compelling men to severe and logical studies, to combat the real learning and forged documents by which, whether designedly or by real credulity, the exactions and pretensions of the priesthood were supported.

It naturally followed that in Italy, though the power of particular Popes and of obnoxious prelates was often unceremoniously defied, yet, from "national reasons," independent of religion, the Popes were the recognised and perpetual heads of the national, or "municipal," and Guelph faction. Italy never had an aristocracy, as the term is understood north of the Alps, *i.e.* an influential, privileged, warlike, territorial caste. Churchmen, poets, artists, and men of letters formed the only distinctive caste, apart from her great commercial houses. The breaking up of the Peninsula into many small states was no doubt in part the cause of this want of aristocratic influence ; but also there cannot exist a doubt that the latter was, and is, utterly alien to the national mind, and the recent laws for the division of property make it impossible now ever to create it. Cosimo, the first Grand Duke, attempted the creation of a landed caste of patricians ; but he only succeeded in making his wealthy subjects utterly idle and useless ; he failed in making them understand the severer and loftier meaning of the term "Noblesse oblige."

After the death of Innocent III. the College of Cardinals elected the late Treasurer-General or Camer-

lingo, Cardinal di San Giovanni, Cencio de' Savelli, under the title of Honorius III., and he made his entry into Rome about six weeks afterwards, August 31, 1216. He was received with unbounded applause, for though feeble and advanced in years, he was of irreproachable life, and equally beloved and revered for piety and generosity.

Mild in manners and in disposition, his first act was to attempt the pacification of the discords that divided the Catholic world; and in pursuance of the sound policy of his able predecessor, he foresaw the imperative necessity of keeping the Kingdom of Sicily separate from the Empire, and summoned Frederick (who still lingered in Germany) to fulfil his promise, and surrender that part of his dominions.

Shortly before the death of Innocent, the friend and patron of Frederick (that is, July 1, 1216), the young Sovereign had, by his advice, and under his instructions, convoked a diet at Strasburg, and with the approbation of the German princes, had sent a document in the following terms to Rome:—"The ever august Frederick, King of the Romans, in his desire to provide for the well-being of the Church, and for that of our hereditary Kingdom (of Sicily), we promise with this present to release our son Henry, already crowned King, by our orders,¹ from the subjection of our paternal power, so soon as we shall have been consecrated to the Empire at Rome. We intend to cede every portion of our kingdom on both sides of the Faro to him, in order that he, like ourselves, may hold in feud to the Apostolic See. We, moreover, engage to give up the title of King,² and all actuality of government over that state. This power shall be delegated by us, under the Papal sanction, to a person held worthy of this office, who shall hold it as custodian of the rights of the Sovereign until the latter is of age. At that time a strict account of the administration and expenditure of

¹ 5 Julii 1216. Quem mandatum nostrum in regem fecimus coronari. Lunig. codex diplom. Ital. Tom. ii., p. 865.

² "Ita quod ex tunc nec habebimus nec nominabimus nos regem Siciliae.

the realm will have to be rendered to the Roman Church, who will preserve inviolate the prerogatives of the Crown, and be ready at all times to thwart the pretensions of such as may dare to effect the union of that kingdom with the Empire." ¹

These solemn engagements, confirming the oaths he had previously taken at Rome, and which he could not refuse to Innocent III., to whom, from whatever motives, he owed so much, Frederick subsequently treated with the most perfect contempt. He had also engaged to take part in a Crusade, and he had often renewed this vow, but, so far as can be seen, without any serious intention of ever fulfilling it. Honorius, of conciliating disposition, and probably more conscious of the futility of these romantic enterprises than his ardent and imperious predecessor, did not exact the accomplishment of the promise with the same rigour the latter would have shown. But the ill faith of Frederick does not the less remain a standing blot on his youthful character, and it proved, as may be anticipated, the beginning of many other acts of unworthy prevarication to elude his engagements with Rome.

When the time which had been determined on, during the deliberations of the last council, as the latest for the departure of the Crusade had arrived, the Pope energetically called upon the chief potentates of Europe to arise, exhorting them to take up the Cross and depart.

This appeal was languidly responded to. France and Italy showed little enthusiasm. A somewhat considerable body of private adventurers, however, of noble birth, seeking novelty and plunder, perhaps, more than anything else, embarked at Brindisi and Messina with their armed retainers, in the spring of 1218.

The Germans were more tardy, turning by common accord towards Frederick, and he giving as a reason for not leading them to the Holy Land, the urgent necessity of his presence in the Empire to secure its peace. He

¹ Ne forte quod aliquid unionis regnum ad imper. quovis tempore putaretur habere. Lunig. codex diplom. Ital. Tom. ii., p. 866.

did not leave Germany until the death of Otho, in May, 1218, which left him undisputed master of the field.

No sooner, however, had Otho expired, than Frederick, unmindful of his vows to depart to Palestine, eagerly turned his eyes, according to the quaint phrase of a chronicler, "with the light desires of the natural man," to the sunny glories of his Sicilian realm. He consequently found fresh reasons to evade his Crusading vows, and occupied himself for two years in the administration of Germany before his return southward. He then caused his son Henry, though only ten years of age, to be named Imperial Vicar during his absence; and at the Diet of Frankfort, of 1220, this boy was elected King of the Romans also. Having thus provided for his succession in case of his own death, Frederick, though deeply conscious of the difficulties he must encounter, nevertheless forsook the Empire (which was most certain to be steadfast to his cause and family), and yielded to the perilous preference he could not but entertain, for the brilliancy and beauty of Southern Italy.

Even at the time in which he lived, this faithless and unwise step was denounced as the first which must lead to his eventual destruction, and considered by the light of subsequent events, it appears more as if dictated by some overpowering and adverse fate, than as the act of a sovereign of the unquestionable genius of Frederick.

In Northern Italy, however, he only displayed the best and wisest qualities he possessed: he was far too sagacious to dream of reviving the pretensions of his grandfather, and sought on the contrary to conciliate by every means the great Ghibelline feudatories who had forsaken his side, and taken part with the Guelph Emperor Otho IV.

The Milanese, however, true to their hereditary hatred of the Hohenstauffens, refused to suffer the coronation of the Emperor as King of Italy with the iron crown, and availing himself of the pretext that the Archbishop of Milan, with whom rested the right to perform the ceremony, was absent in Palestine, Frederick did not insist, and asked permission to proceed from Verona to Rome.

On renewing his engagements with the Pontifical Court, he moved onwards, accompanied by the Empress Constance of Arragon, and a numerous train of prelates, princes, and nobles, both German and Italian, who, with a great array of the delegates of the communes, were to be witnesses of his consecration. Many others, of all these classes, had preceded him, to enhance the state of his public entry within the gates of Rome.

According to ancient custom, the Imperial tents were pitched on Monte Mario, or Malo; and there Frederick swore to respect the liberties of Rome, to offer no damage or offence to the goods or persons of the cardinals, and to give over to the Church the possessions of the Countess Matilda, which had been the object of contention for above a century, though they had never been formally restored to the Church.

An explicit separation was ratified between the Kingdom of Sicily and the Empire, and Frederick engaged never to claim any rights on that country, save as touching his hereditary personal succession to it.¹

He also, at the express personal request of the Pontiff, engaged himself to undertake the command of a Crusade in Asia in the following August, and to send over five hundred men-at-arms there, in the month of March preceding that date.

The plea given for the delay of the Emperor's own departure was the necessity of restoring peace and order in the realm of Sicily, then convulsed by the contentions of rebellious nobles, and of the Saracens in full revolt.

These questions having been satisfactorily adjusted, Frederick II. and Constance made their solemn entry into Rome on the 22nd of November, 1220, and were crowned with great magnificence at St. Peter's. Not the smallest untoward incident interfered with the rejoicings of the occasion. After the sacred chrism had been administered, the lights around the altar were all extinguished, and then, the entire body of ecclesiastics being assembled in the choir of the church, each holding a lighted taper

¹ Privil. Eccl. Romanæ. (MSS. f. 188.)

reversed in his hand, Honorius pronounced the curse of the Church against heretics of both sexes, and against those who gave them refuge and help.

All who published or brought attainder against the goods and immunities of the Church were involved in the same sentence.¹ Finally, under the title of "*Imperial Constitutions*" (*Costituzioni Imperiali*), the decrees issued by Frederick were promulgated at the request of the Pope. These decrees struck with nullity the acts of all such persons as fell under the Papal anathema; others related to the safety and protection of the rustic *bifolchi* (ploughmen) and pilgrims. Another ordered the repression of heresy, branded sectarians with infamy, and condemned them to banishment in perpetuity, with confiscation of their goods and property.²

Whosoever laid a tax on churches or churchmen, or invaded their possessions, was to make amends to the *triple* value of the sum extorted by illegal means, and to be placed under the ban of the Empire.

Again, before the sacred ceremony was terminated, Frederick renewed his vow to deliver the Holy Land from the yoke of the infidel, and he received for the second time, from the hands of the Cardinal Ugolino, the badge of the Cross, which he affixed to his robes.³ And, following his example, the Bishop of Metz, great Chancellor of the Empire, the Duke of Bavaria, and more than four hundred knights and gentlemen, assumed the Cross under the eyes of the Pontiff, who rejoicingly gave the news to the Papal legate at Damietta.⁴

On his part, Frederick was anxious to obtain the favour and support of the Church to his interest in the Italian provinces, but he soon became aware of a systematic and well-organised plan of policy at Rome in direct opposition to these. The thirty years that succeeded his

¹ 11 Nov. (4), 1221. (Reg. Honorii, Lib. v., n. 310.)

² In criminali questione vel civili (Constitut. in Basilic. Beati Petri. ap. Pertz. T. iv., p. 243-45.)

³ Rursus crucem accepit. Abbas. Usperg., p. 245.

⁴ 27 Novemb., 1220 (Regist. Honor. III., Lib. v., n. 234). Cherrier. Histoire de la Lutte des Papes &c., Vol. ii., p. 15.

coronation at Rome to his death at Firenzuola were the most eventful in the history of Italy: they formed the turning point, as it were, for the reascendency of the Latin against the Teutonic element in modern society. The Guelph supremacy in Italy was conquered, and for ever, and the Papal cause being identified with that of national liberty, the Tiara was finally exalted over the Crown, nor, in spite of the romantic halo which must ever surround the name of the greatest of the Hohenstauffens, can his political cause arouse sympathy, or his fall regret. It will be our task to sketch impartially, as far as our limits permit, the leading events of this momentous and absorbing struggle.

True to the policy of his predecessors, Frederick listened with alarm and hatred to the overt declaration of communistic or social doctrines which, as we have seen, were so widely spread and boldly preached by the many religious sects dissenting from the Church of Rome—doctrines which could not but be highly acceptable to the common people, then almost universally under the bond of some form of serfdom. The quickest and most effectual way to arrest these preachers was to persecute them as heretics; consequently, Frederick, whose entire life showed his own freedom from religious superstitions, and from that sincere fanaticism which is the sole palliative to be pleaded in favour of bloodthirsty bigotry, revived and put into execution the savage laws against heresy, that were indeed to be found in the code of Theodosius, but had never or rarely been put into execution; and which had been, until then, considered as revolting, by the generally lenient spirit of the Catholic divines.

Every penalty short of the flames was put aside when heretics and unbelievers were to be tortured, and the only condition on which their lives were to be spared was that of being “instrumental in procuring the condemnation of others.” In this case they were *merely* to have their tongues torn out,¹ “those unruly

¹ Aut si miserabili vitæ et coercionem aliorum detegerint reservandum, cum linguæ plectro deprivent.

members having been instrumental to blasphemy of God."

Barbarossa, the grandfather of Frederick, had attempted to stifle dawning civil and religious reforms when he had hurried on the execution of Arnaldo da Brescia at the stake, but he had entirely failed, and his grandson, asserting the wildest aristocratic freedom of rule, and forbearing from the fulfilment of all oaths that checked his own despotism, now eagerly fulfilled the most barbarous of his engagements with Rome, not from the desire to increase the power of the latter, but from dread of the *democratic spirit* which was gaining ground throughout his dominions. Frederick thus began the fatal path which led him onwards to his disastrous end; he had only one aim—the extirpation of all enemies to any limitation of his power. Heretics and churchmen we shall find executed with the same unrelenting cruelty when in opposition to him, and this absorbing selfishness and self-idolatry effectually neutralised the extraordinary gifts of administrative organisation, which it will be our more pleasing duty to allude to later, and which caused his reign to be in some respects the most flourishing epoch Sicily and Apulia have ever known.

The beginning of the warfare between Frederick and the Church was his defiance of his repeated and solemn engagements to sail for the East, in spite of his having invoked publicly an imprecation from the Pope if he failed in the observance of his vows.¹ It is true he obtained the approbation of Rome by the severities he enforced against heretics. But he took care to profit himself by all the confiscations of the property of the latter, and not content with these spoils, he proceeded, against his engagements, to levy taxes, and to impose regulations on the clergy.

Under the pretext of loans, he exacted sums from the sees and abbacies to an amount that exposed the clergy to the greatest embarrassments. The sum extorted from

¹ Quod in alicujus termini solutione defecerimus; lata sententia excommunicationis tenemus astricti. 1222, Mense Julii. (Regist. Honor. III., loc. cit.)

the famous abbacy of Monte Cassino alone amounted to no less than three hundred thousand ounces of gold! He also revived an obsolete law by which every churchman accused of treason or homicide was to appear before the royal assize court, however exalted might be his rank. This law, in direct contradiction to the long established privileges of the ecclesiastical courts, was sorely felt at Rome; and as a proof of instant reprisals, a number of titular bishops were named to the Sees of Salerno, Capua, Aversa, Brindisi, and Cousa, without any further notice of Frederick than a demand for their "immediate induction into their several sees," in token "of reverence to God and for the good of his soul."

The Emperor's indignation being thus aroused, a series of acrimonious protests and recriminations followed, which were the harbingers of the inveterate hostility, thenceforth undying, between the rival despotisms of the Church and the Empire. We have seen how entirely and how wantonly Frederick was the aggressor; and, accordingly, we find that the entire sympathies of Europe were on the side of Rome.

The next period of the life of Frederick commences with his marriage—after the death of his first wife, Constance of Arragon, mother of Henry, the titular King of the Romans—with the fair daughter of John of Brienne, nominal King of Jerusalem.

The bride was very beautiful, and but sixteen years of age. She was conducted from Ptolemais to Brindisi with great pomp, and at the latter city the marriage was solemnized with becoming magnificence; a new gold coin, indeed, was struck on this occasion, called "Augustale;" on one side it bore the effigy of the Emperor, and on the other that of an eagle.¹

This union was not happy. A kinswoman of the bride, who had accompanied her to Italy, inspired Frederick with a passion as impolitic and unreasonable as unseemly and ill-timed. John of Brienne, indignant at the neglect

¹ Villani says that the Augustale was worth one quarter more than the golden florin of Florence.

of his daughter, and resenting the affront to himself (which the overt triumph of her unlawful rival certainly might be considered), gave way to the fiercest transports of anger, and indulged in language so intemperate¹ that Frederick commanded him to leave the kingdom. As if purposely desirous to make the breach irreparable, he soon after assumed himself the title of "King of Jerusalem;" and not satisfied with exacting the oaths of fealty from the barons who had accompanied John from the East, he sent the Bishop of Melfi to Ptolemais, with three hundred chosen lances, to win over to his interests the Christian colonies in those regions, and created Ugo di Monbegliardo his Imperial Vicar over them. This overbearing infatuation of Frederick's resentment, against the just and natural anger of John of Jerusalem, caused the latter to throw himself ardently into the Guelph party, and to use his influence in every way in favour of Rome; and he thus succeeded in effecting deep and lasting injury to his son-in-law.

Although he was bordering on his eightieth year, he resolved to marry again, in the hope of frustrating Frederick of the inheritance he had shown himself so greedy to realise, by the birth of a son;² and he married Berengaria, daughter of Alfonso IX., of Castille and Leon.

John was a man of great vigour still, in spite of his age, and he seemed to be determined to commence life anew; for he first took up his abode at Bologna, then the head-quarters of the Guelph party, sought to win favour with the Podestà, and was subsequently received with much favour at the Court of Rome; the Romans even granted him a subsidy of sixty thousand crowns.

Honourous at first wrote in his behalf to Frederick, but no notice being taken of his interposition, he engaged John de Brienne in his own service, making him governor

¹ The chronicler says that, besides other terms of vituperation, he called the Emperor, "In gallico suo appellavit Imperatorem *Ceccarii filium*." Salimbeni, f. 225.

² He had a daughter by his young wife.

of the Pontifical states from Radicofani to Rome by a Papal brief, which assured to the population of those countries an interval of peace and prosperity.

The brief did not, however, include the Marches of Ancona, the Duchy of Spoleto, the Rieti or Sabine districts. If it had, John of Jerusalem might have been but too largely compensated for the loss of his phantom sovereignty in the East.

The internal discords of the Guelph cities, and the overt outrages perpetrated within their walls, had now begun to inspire in the insatiable mind of Frederick the hope of again successfully asserting the Imperial rights virtually abolished by the League of Pontida, and, in any case, long fallen into desuetude. He therefore summoned a grand court, or public assembly, to meet at Easter, 1226. No sooner was this known than Honorius strained every possible effort to conciliate the factions of the cities, and to open their eyes to the dangers their liberties were menaced with anew, by the arrival of the Emperor—followed by a powerfully armed suite and an innumerable body of feudatories—if the towns were found distracted with combats, and enfeebled by carnage and exile.

The common sense of the approaching peril caused the arguments of the Pontiff to be heard with respect; and a temporary peace was proclaimed, after a general meeting of the delegates of the cities, June 10, 1225, under the Loggia del "Broletto," in Milan. This was soon followed by another Lombard League,¹ the terms of which were settled March 10, 1226, in the church of San Zeno, at Mosio, a small "borgo," or town, in the territory of Mantua, where the Guelph Federal Diet was convoked.

Here the party mustered with great strength, including the representatives of Milan, Piacenza Faenza, Bologna, Verona, Vicenza, Padua, Treviso, Brescia, Mantua, Vercelli, Lodi, Bergamo, Turin, and Alexandria, besides many great feudal nobles, amongst whom were the long-faithful Imperialist Marquis of Montferrat, and the Counts of

¹ Storia Diplm. di Frederigo II., T. ii., p. 548.

Blandrade, one of whom had been created, in 1221, Count of Romagna by the Emperor.

Though this Federal Diet was nominally summoned for the establishment of peace, Frederick could not but know it was a declaration of hostility to him at the instigation of Rome, and he therefore resolved on measures calculated to intimidate the Guelphs. He sent to command the return of his son Henry from Germany, at the head of a powerful army.

Henry was then just sixteen; Frederick had shown consummate judgment in confiding the tutelage of his son, and the government of the German Empire, to Engelbert, Archbishop of Cologne, a prelate whose exalted virtues and administrative genius had commanded the reverence and admiration of the country he had pacified, enriched, improved, and adorned.

But assassination had lately ended the days of this celebrated and admirable man; he was murdered by a near kinsman, whose violent crimes he had impartially opposed and repressed. This great public calamity took place in 1225, just after the marriage of Henry with Margaret, daughter of Leopold VII. of Austria and Styria.

Louis, Duke of Bavaria, succeeded Engelbert in his high office of Chancellor of the Empire. But, unhappily for the latter, he neither possessed the capacity nor the virtues of his predecessor, to whom unlimited confidence had been wisely granted by Frederick; and we mark it as a strange proof of his inconsistent character (the more worthy of consideration, when we have seen his consummate treachery and rashness in alienating Rome, and even John of Brienne) that he granted unlimited and unprecedented prerogatives to this same stripling son of his, Henry, with power of confirming feuds, and convocations of diets—all attributes of sovereignty, heretofore jealously guarded as personal marks of power by the Emperors. Henry had been crowned at Aix-la-Chapelle, as King of the Romans, in the year 1222, when he was consequently about twelve years of age only; and in obedience to his father, he now moved by the Tyrol on Italy; but at

Chiusi, in the territory of the Trent, the forces of the Guelph league made such a vigorous and significant opposition to his passage that he was compelled to turn back, and to leave the Trentine territory.

Bitterly disappointed, Frederick gathered round him a limited number of nobles, and the representatives of a few of the Italian communes. They assembled at the small town of San Donino, a dependency of Cremona, and the head-quarters of the Ghibellines. There he was joined, from Germany, by the Duke of Saxony, the Landgrave of Thuringia, and the Marquis of Baden, who came to Italy, accompanied by a band of armed followers.

There were also at San Donino the representatives of Modena, Parma, Reggio, Pavia, Asti, Genoa, Lucca, and Pisa, ever faithful to the Ghibellines. The Count of Swabia, and the Marquis of Este and the Malaspina of the Lunigiana answered the summons. The prelates of Lombardy, strangely enough, believed (or had received instructions to affect to believe) that a perfect understanding subsisted between Frederick and Honorius; consequently, we find Gerald, Patriarch of Jerusalem, and the Archbishop of Milan and Reggio at Cremona (or San Donino), and the Bishops of Vercelli, Brescia, Novara, and Turin.

Frederick, enraged at the compulsory retreat of his son Henry, and unable to chastise the Guelphs, could only show his wrath by the issue of a series of violent and absurd decrees, abolishing (nominally) the Guelph liberties and privileges, placing the cities under the ban of the Empire, depriving Bologna (nominally also) of its celebrated University (founded at the close of the eleventh century), and commanding the teachers and students to be removed to Naples.¹ He then published a manifesto to foreign powers, justifying these decrees by the "rebellion," as he termed it, "of the Guelphs," and by their armed opposition to the entrance of his son into Italy. "Thus," he ended (with astute hypocrisy), "they had defeated his own earnest desire to depart for the East, in

¹ Not one of them moved.

the fulfilment of his vow, and of suppressing heresy, which was rife and rampant in the Northern Provinces of Italy."

The Pope had every reason to sigh in good earnest for the pacification of the Guelphs and Ghibellines; for until that was accomplished he could not expect that Frederick would depart for Palestine; and the fondest dream of every Pontiff was the permanent delivery of the Holy Sepulchre from the infidels during his reign, and the restoration of the Holy Land to, or, to speak more correctly, the conquest of the Holy Land by, the Roman Church. But Frederick, in the recklessness of his despotism, outstripped his powers, and though he caused the Bishop of Hildesheim, who was then preaching a Crusade in Lombardy, to issue a sentence of excommunication against the Guelphs as hinderers, by rebellion, of this holy cause, the Pope, notwithstanding the approbation of the Lombard prelates, and the prevalence of heresy, wisely revoked the anathema, and disallowed its penalties, choosing to reserve the monopoly of malediction in his own more temperate hands.

On the 5th of January, 1227, a sort of compromise was effected by the arbitration of Rome. Both the factions were equally insincere; but the prolonged state of suspense was equally disastrous to both. The League was not dissolved, and though Frederick was induced to rescind his violent and foolish decrees, his purpose of subduing the cities was not altered. Nevertheless, he still made fair promises of keeping the vow, now of twelve years' standing; and the King of Hungary received public and formal notice to make preparations for departure from Brindisi, in company with the Landgrave of Thuringia (surnamed the Saint), in the month of August following. But the gentle and aged Honorius did not live to see this expedition, on which he had centred his last earthly hopes, depart for the Holy Land. He died at Rome after a reign of ten years, on the 18th of March, 1227, and was succeeded by Cardinal Ugolino, of the Counts of Segni, a near kinsman of Innocent III., who was elected by the College of Cardinals a few days after, and ascended

the Pontifical chair under the title of Gregory IX. Of the same family as Innocent III., and following the same policy, Gregory afforded, at the age of eighty-six, an astonishing example of intellectual vigour and capacity.

Age seemed but to have matured his great mental powers, his inflexible policy, and his strength of judgment; his famed powers of eloquence were not yet impaired, nor had he forgotten his profound knowledge of jurisprudence and of the canon laws.

Above all, after twenty-nine years spent in the sacred college, he was bent on establishing the reign of the Church after the system initiated by Hildebrand, and carried out by Innocent III. The double object of Gregory was, therefore, to get rid of Frederick by a Crusade, and if the Holy Sepulchre were conquered it would be a lawful cause for the rejoicing of all Christianity. But he fully understood that until the Italian provinces were pacified, in appearance at least, he could not urge on the Emperor the desertion of his dominions.

Frederick did not spare any outward professions of his anxiety to redeem his vow; he caused his son Henry to announce at a General Diet of the Empire the imminent departure of the troops from Brindisi, and he sent a mission to Gregory to inform him of his own intention of leading the Crusade in person. The Pope answered in strains of exultation: "Heaven has placed thee upon earth under semblance of an angel armed with a flaming sword, to drag within the bounds of the tree of life all such as are tempted to stray."¹

Nor were appearances in that year antagonistic to the ardent aspirations of the Pontiff; for, in the month of June, 1227, a vast multitude of Crusaders from the various cities of Europe did gather in Southern Italy. Of English only there were sixty thousand men, besides women and children. The princes of the Empire had promised to lead their troops in person, and a great agitation pervaded Christianity. Signs and wonders were of course not wanting to confirm the faith of the devout

¹ Regist. Greg. IX., Lib. 1., p. 142. Petri de Vineis, Epist. T. 1., p. 64.

and to strike the incredulous with confusion. Matthew Paris¹ reports that "Our Lord had been seen in the heavens, illumined with a radiant light; the figure was outstretched on the Cross, and blood flowed freely from five wounds in His side." This, and other similar marvels and the popular exhortations of preachers, had aroused the most enthusiastic faith in the multitude; but the Cross they found speedily to be intended for themselves, for besides the privations and dangers of the journey, the unfortunate Crusaders were exposed to the utmost sufferings from hunger, thirst, and disease; encamped on the pestilential plains of Apulia, under the burning sun, whilst awaiting the slow and inefficient preparations made for their embarkation for the East. The complaints against Frederick were loud and bitter, and probably to some extent well founded, though it would have overtasked the resources and energies of any government, even if concentrated on that single enterprise, to have provided, in so remote and unhealthy a corner of Italy, for the safety and maintenance of a heterogeneous multitude of indefinite numbers.

Frederick at last appeared at Brindisi, and in his presence forty thousand men were embarked. He also ascended a vessel, amidst tumultuous acclamations, accompanied by the saintly Landgrave of Thuringia, the Patriarch of Jerusalem, and the Papal legate. The Pontiff was overjoyed, and zealous preachers were already busily anticipating the triumph of the Cross, when the disheartening news arrived that Frederick had been seized with the pestilential fever, which had already thinned so severely the ranks of the Crusaders, and had been put ashore at Otranto, three days after his embarkation, in hopes of finding better physicians than on board his galley. The fever raged with redoubled fury in the crowded vessels, deficient in every means of alleviating the sufferings of the sick, and the losses on board exceeded even those on land.

Frederick addressed a humble letter to Gregory, inform-

ing him of this misfortune, and declaring his intention of re-embarking as soon as he was cured. Gregory was then residing at Anagni, where he had sought refuge from the atmosphere of Rome, in comparative coolness, and in the purest air to be attained. Regardless of the sufferings from which he was exempt, he took an immediate and characteristic mode of wreaking his rage at the unlooked-for turn of events in Southern Italy. The following day was the festival of Saint Michael, and crowds of prelates and ecclesiastics were gathered in the Cathedral. After mass a sermon was preached on the text "*Necesse est ut eveniant scandala*" (it is necessary scandal should arise); and without further preliminary preparation, he proceeded to pronounce the sentence of excommunication on the Emperor, the bells tolling as for the dead, and the lighted tapers in the hands of the priests were reversed, in token of reprobation of the damned. Without deigning to listen to the messengers of Frederick, the infuriated Pope then announced to the prelates of Italy, and to the potentates and great barons of the Empire, his reasons for having pronounced the last curses of the Church upon Frederick. "This Prince," says Gregory in his brief, "whom the Church has nursed with her milk, and torn from the clutch of implacable foes; whom it has educated, and upheld with its powerful hands, and guided to the term of manhood; whom it has confirmed on the throne of his maternal ancestry, and elevated to the Imperial crown; that prince of whom the Church expected defence, help, and sustenance, the same has forgotten all her former benefactions. He, after having involuntarily assumed the Cross, without the previous knowledge or prompting of our predecessors of happy memory, the same has treated that oath with contempt, though repeated in Germany, Rome, Veroli, and at San Germano, on which last occasion he spontaneously offered to submit to excommunication should the non-accomplishment of his vow follow his last solemn oath.

"Now what follows? Having previously assembled

the soldiers of the Cross on pestilential plains, causing them to remain there exposed to the canicular heat, deprived of food, lacking vessels of transport, subject to penury, to the burning heat of the sun, a prey to thirst and disease, he has left them, with tearless eye, there, in that condition, allowing the favourable season for navigation to pass, looking indifferently on the sufferings of a perishing multitude—amongst whom were numberless prelates, nobles, and people of all ranks—dying within his sight.

“This same prince, trampling the fear of God beneath his feet, and that of ecclesiastical censure, has returned, to his eternal shame, and to the prejudice of the Christian world at large, to plunge himself into the sphere of his accustomed pleasures in Sicily; striving meantime under frivolous excuses to veil the abject condition of heart to which he is a prey.”

Farther on he resumes, with great apparent regret at having been driven to this extreme severity: “Behold, if there be sorrow equal to that felt by the Church, your mother, so often and so cruelly deceived by a beloved son, in whom she had reposed her hopes! The Holy Land, which, through the fault of this same son, has been lost to the Christians, whilst it might have been restored to the community in lieu of Damiata—the Holy Land was about to be delivered from an odious yoke, when that Crusade, from which such excellent results were anticipated, was all at once put a stop to, by the same who had assumed its command. Now, in order not to resemble those mute dogs who do not warn passers-by of their peril, inasmuch as they have no voices, and in order also that we may not be accused of preferring man to God, which would doubtless be the case were we to desist from punishing the author of so great a disaster—he who has publicly betrayed all his promises; therefore, we declare with sorrow the Emperor Frederick to be excommunicated. We forbid the maintenance of any whatsoever intercourse with his person, reserving to ourselves the right of acting with even greater severity towards him, should it become necessary.

“ Our faith in the Divine mercy encourages us with the hope that there, where total rebellion is not meditated, this *ecclesiastical collirium* will restore a clearer vision to his darkened sight, and that, when he shall have discerned the ignominy with which he has covered himself, it is to be hoped he will, in all humility, give satisfaction to the Church.

“ God is our witness that we are far from desiring the ruin of him who once possessed our friendship, even previous to our elevation to this post.”

This circular brief, followed by others of a similar character, caused a deep and lasting feeling of aversion and of contempt for Frederick in the Christian world, already envious of his great power and of the flourishing state of his Empire ; for though many of the allegations of the Pontiff were absurd and unjust, such as the physical sufferings of the great disorderly hordes of Crusaders in the burning plains of Apulia (sufferings which could in nowise be laid to the account of the Emperor), yet the real offence of the latter, the evasion of his obligation to sail for the East, had been too long clearly visible for Gregory not to have all sympathies on his side on that point. More than one monarch would have shared the Pontiff's raptures of delight had so dangerous a contemporary sovereign emulated the enterprise of Barbarossa, and succumbed a martyr to the Cross, leaving his states to the nominal rule of a youth of sixteen.

The ecclesiastical sentence of Gregory was, nevertheless, premature, and more completely annihilated all the prospects of his own anxious hopes being fulfilled than did the fever of Frederick II.

Most of the greater chiefs of the intended Crusade were glad to draw back from that hazardous undertaking, under the plea that an excommunicated man, cut off from the sacraments and the offices of the Church, was not a leader to be followed by the champions of the latter ; many were really affected by the terrors of the anathema ; the English Crusaders, who had been foremost in zeal up to this time, retreated on hearing of the

excommunication, declaring themselves released from their oaths. The Sicilian fleet, which had landed the first body of Crusaders at Ptolemais, and thus raised the hopes of the Eastern Christians, was compelled by the former to re-embark them for Europe, on the publication of Gregory's censures on Frederick. And thus, between the intemperate fury of the Pontiff and the illness and indifference of the Emperor, the Crusade proved an utter failure, and only served to strew the plains of Apulia with the bones of as many brave warriors as if a great battle had been fought upon them.

As Frederick did not die of the fever, but, on the contrary, soon shook it off at the baths of Pozzuoli, the prejudiced world, declining to consider what the restorative forces of isolation, purer air, and mineral baths really might have effected in a case of fever, pronounced his attack as a mere deception, and declared it an excuse to return to his favourite amusements and course of policy.

The deaths, by the pestilence, of the saintly Landgrave of Thuringia, and of many distinguished prelates, exasperated still more the fury of the Guelph party, and, without the smallest evidence, a torrent was opened against Frederick, who had now committed the inexpiable offence of surviving a dangerous epidemic, and of remaining an inconvenient neighbour in Italy. He was immediately accused of having poisoned an uncongenial companion,¹ whose sincere anxiety in behalf of the holy Crusade put his mockeries of his oaths to shame.

"May it please God," wrote Gregory IX., "that this death (that of the Landgrave of Thuringia) may not have been brought about by poison, according to the public voice."

Frederick, with a good policy, which he had possibly learnt in the course of his education at Rome, made no

¹ Inter quos Landgrav procurata morte opinione publica creditur interiisse. Vita Gregor. IX., p. 576. "Dicebatur quod veneni portione mortifera periisset." Annal. Argentin. Boehemer. Fontes. T. iii., p. 105.

attempt to dispute the validity of the excommunication ; on the contrary, he affected to be most earnestly impressed by it, and sent many messengers with letters of deprecation and of contrition to Gregory, renewing all his engagements as to the Crusade, and only entreating time to recover his health ; he sought, with much ostentatious anxiety and fervour, a personal audience with the Pontiff at Anagni. Gregory was not to be appeased by these politic professions of submission ; perhaps he would have preferred a defiance as arrogant and tempestuous as his own ; but Frederick had learnt wisdom from his own rash fury in upper Italy, and forbore, just then, to retort on the Pope. The latter refused the proposed interview at Anagni, declaring that he could hold no communication with an excommunicated person, against whom " he brandished, *in a spirit of meekness*, the salutary sword of Saint Peter."¹ In pursuance of his inflexible resentment, he also took occasion, soon after his return from Anagni to Rome, to renew the anathema against the Emperor at a great religious solemnity, in presence of many Roman and foreign ecclesiastics ; he placed the Kingdom of Sicily and Naples under interdict, and threatened still further severities should Frederick persevere in his disobedience " to the will of God."

Frederick answered by a public letter addressed to the sovereigns and lords of Christianity, couched in a tone of severity and of eloquent truth against the abuses and pretensions of Rome, which rendered all forgiveness on the part of the Pontiff impossible. This masterpiece of evidence and of independence of thought was, as is believed, the composition of Peir delle Vigne, but was assumed as Frederick's own ; it adequately entitles him to the stigma intended by Rome in terming him the " Son of Belial," that " Son of Perdition," and so on.² " Did not the English king," he writes, " witness the unceasing ruth-

¹ *Medicinalem Petri gladium in eum exclusimus in spiritu humilitatis. Ex. Regist. Greg. IX. lib. i., n. 180.*

² *Matthew of Paris, ad ann. 1228, p. 239.*

less persecution of his father, oppressed under the weight of anathema, until he had submitted himself to the payment of ransom and homage? The Count of Toulouse and many other princes have been victims of that perfidious policy which is now visited on the head of the Empire, pretending to punish him for heresy without any plausible motive soever, and on the faith of a simple conjecture, which thousands of witnesses might easily be called upon to overthrow. All would, in such case, affirm that if we returned from our already undertaken voyage, it was by no means from that *frivolous pretext* the Pope dares to affirm. We appeal from this sentence," Frederick goes on to say, "to Him who from the heavens can read the human heart."

Again he exclaims: "Behold the simony of the Romans, their extortions and usury, with which they poison the air of the universe. Insatiable leeches, or bloodsuckers, whose unctuous words flow like oil, and are as honey, sweet. According to their pretensions, the Pontifical Court represents the Holy Mother Church, our parent and nurse; instead of which her actions are worthy of a step-mother, and she has become the source and centre of all the evils that befall us.

"Is it necessary to remind the barons of England that Innocent III. drove them on to revolt against King John, whom he termed 'the enemy of God'? But no sooner did that prince declare his vassalage to the Holy See than the said Pope, in outrage of all human feelings, trampled under his feet those same barons he had imperilled, in the sole hope that his mouth, ever stretched to its full width, might swallow a more abundant supply of prey. Such are the habits of the Romans; such are the traps laid for prelates and princes, for their submission and the spoliation of their property. Hidden within the skins of lambs, the Romans are ravenous wolves. Their legates, instead of promulgating the Divine law, and causing its fruition on earth, seek only to satisfy their hunger for pelf, and to endeavour to gather the harvest which their hands have not sown. These degenerate

and despicable men, swollen with a vain science, dare to aspire to the possessions of empires and kingdoms; but when, in primitive times, the Church numbered each day new saints, she dazzled in her simplicity, and acquired lustre in her disdain of mere earthly grandeur.

“Would it not seem, on beholding the insatiable avarice of the Roman ecclesiastics, that the walls of the church, founded on so bad a foundation, should, on first beginning to quake, be threatened with an immediate fall?”

The letter closes thus:—“To the princes of the earth it devolves to resist manœuvres as unjust as they are dangerous, and to keep themselves in readiness to act in opposition to such iniquities.”¹

Besides sending this letter to all the Courts of Europe, Frederick caused it to be read in the commonwealths of Italy, and even in the capital of Rome,² by the connivance of the Senate, for he was in active negotiation with many of the great families of Rome. But, naturally, these words, proceeding from an Emperor whose previous conduct had been but too open to censure, and themselves devoid of the advantages which the printing-press would have given them in later ages, had but a feeble echo, compared to the loud sounds of the “brazen instruments” which Rome could command everywhere by means of the pulpit and the influence of the Church.

¹ “Exhortantes orbis principes universos ut contra tantam sibi prospiciant avaritiam et iniquitatem.” Matthew of Paris, p. 239.

² Ricc. di S. Germ., p. 1004.

CHAPTER XII.

Frederick II., continued—Triumph of the Tiara.

WE left the Emperor and the Pope exchanging, with equal intensity of bitterness, verbal declarations of hostility; but Frederick trusted far more to the force of events, and to his own good fortune, than to letters, however logical, and denunciations, however just. He had long before assiduously courted the alliance of the fickle and treacherous Roman populace and nobility; he had purchased property to a large extent inside the walls of Rome, and conferred it, under the title of "investiture," in his own name, on many powerful families, whom he thus disposed in his own behalf. On the other hand, his natural enemies, the Guelphs, were busily occupying themselves in fortifying the Alpine passes against his German auxiliary troops, and the Pope, more furious than ever, and desirous of publishing as widely as possible the schism between the Emperor and himself, convened a small Synod of bishops, at Rome, at Easter, 1228, to lay before them the last "enormities" of the accursed one.

Frederick had compelled the churches in many cities of his realm to be opened by the civil justices, and divine service to be performed, in defiance of ecclesiastical censures. The Pope, therefore, reiterated the sentence of excommunication in Rome with all solemnity; threatening furthermore to aggravate the anathema by releasing the great barons of the Empire from their oaths of allegiance, should the refractory Sovereign persevere in his course of rebellion.

When men were all of one mind in a political cause, as was the case of the barons of England at the date of Magna Charta, we have seen how ineffectual were the wildest and worst Papal threats against their bold, hardy

common sense. But in a great empire like Germany, swayed by a number of turbulent, jealous, and ambitious petty rulers, several of whom were almost equal in power, and could naturally aspire to the place of an emperor, they were not sorry (indeed, never were sorry) to have an excuse for deposing him. The threat of Gregory meant the raising up of a rival to Frederick, in his own land, and was eagerly listened to with hope by one party, and fear by another. But the Roman nobles and people did not support their furious and savage Sovereign at this outbreak, and took, instead, the contrary side.

The Pope had attended mass at the Lateran, and had from thence repaired to Saint Peter's, where he had preached another sermon, equally if not more vituperative than the former, against Frederick; when a tumult arose, headed by the Imperialist nobles, and was as usual warmly seconded by the mob. The riot spread from the church to the city; and Gregory, alone in the hands of the lowest orders, and grievously maltreated, was glad to fly for his life to Viterbo, followed hotly by his foes. From Viterbo he withdrew to the faithful city of Perugia, where he resided, until he was recalled by the Romans, about three years afterwards.

As if in warning against the folly of superannuated fury, and the indulgence of savage and unchristian, as well as impolitic rage, an opportunity now presented itself which, if it had but been improved by the vindictive and sullen Pontiff, would have, in all earthly probability, assured to Christianity and to Rome the supremacy over the Holy Sepulchre, Jerusalem, and Palestine. This part of the history of Pope and Emperor is well worthy of a somewhat detailed narration.

Malek-Adel, the great Soldan of the East, had died, leaving fifteen sons, each of whom was desirous of obtaining the richer portions of the paternal inheritance. One of these, Malek-Kamil, the Sultan of Babylon (or Egypt), as he was called, having heard of Frederick's intended expedition to the Holy Land, and knowing him to be a man famed for learning and power, bethought him of

attempting to form a treaty of friendship with him, hoping by his aid to oppose a league formed by his brother Mo'azzam with Djelalledin, Sultan of Karisman, whose very name was the terror of the Mussulmans. Malek-Kamil held out as a bait the possession of Jerusalem—of which, as we have seen, Frederick had already unlawfully assumed the title of King—and of Palestine, when those provinces should be conquered.

An Emir was sent to Frederick, whose perfect mastery of Arabic and other Eastern tongues enabled him to treat directly with envoys of those nations, independent of the doubtful aid of interpreters. The Emir was well received, and his presents graciously accepted; he was charged with assurances of Frederick's goodwill to the Sultan of Egypt, and departed with valuable gifts for his master, according to the custom of the East.

In spite of the secrecy of this negotiation, it became suspected some time afterwards, and the rage and fear of the Italian Guelphs knew no bounds, at the wealth and glory it would heap on their foe.

Frederick soon became desirous in good earnest of following up the scheme by embarking for Palestine, never doubting but that the Pope, who had struggled so fiercely to compel him to lead the Crusade, would immediately retract his sentence of excommunication, and change his position from the state of ban to that of blessing (like the penitent prodigal's). But he reckoned without knowledge of the implacable and personal hostility of Gregory. The recovery of Jerusalem was to him a matter of secondary moment, compared to his burning thirst for revenge upon Frederick. The conduct, indeed, of the Pontiff affords a most instructive lesson of the overwhelming sway of violent passions, surviving in extreme age the genius for administration, and of the advancement of the interests of the Church, which had been so conspicuous in him during his earlier years.

If he had but taken advantage of the happy opening afforded to Christianity by the disputes of the Moslemite princes, and with easy policy had conciliated the

Emperor, and aided him in an enterprise of which the advantage must have remained to the Church, there is every reason to believe the Holy Sepulchre—not won for a moment through streams of blood and over heaps of slain, but permanently ceded, by an open treaty, to a great monarch—would have been effectually Christianised, and have formed a bulwark against the infidel invasions. It must, in any case, have been a bright, proud jewel in the Papal tiara, whilst its annexation would have covered the Pontificate of Gregory with glory. Humanly speaking, he had likewise in his favour the apparently slender chances of life of his rival: for evil passions and insatiable ambition had already wrought such an appearance of age, and even of decrepitude, in Frederick that, though only thirty-four years of age, his hair had fallen off, and his eyes, famed for their brilliant, piercing glance, were already weakened as if by age. Indeed, an Arabian writer, who saw him some time after, describes him thus:—"If the great Emperor of the Romans had been born a slave, he would not have been sold for more than two hundred drachms." ¹

As a proof of his sincerity, and in hopes that the publicity of the act would arouse the attention and relax the severity of Rome, Frederick convened a general Parliament of prelates and nobles at Barletta, to witness his testament, which he had prepared previous to his departure for Palestine. He hurried from Ravenna, where he had also held a public and stately Court, towards Barletta, to be present at the Parliament, accompanied by his young wife, the beautiful Isabel de Brienne, then on the point of becoming a mother. But the fatigues and dangers of the way, through the marshes of Ancona, across streams, through deep ravines, and by paths hardly passable, caused the poor young Empress to be confined at Andria. There Conrad, always the object of Frederick's fondest solicitude, was born. But the rejoicings which attended his birth were soon clouded, for ten days afterwards the gentle and unhappy young mother expired from the effects of

¹ "Si servus fuisset CC. Drachmis venditi fuerunt." Ext. de D. Bertherean, MS. Arab. T. i., *Chronic. de Yafei*, p. 9.

fatigue, and the want of all things needful in her perilous case.

The grief of Frederick was intense. He caused her to be interred at Andria with the greatest magnificence, and concentrated the warmest affection on her infant son. It was after this heavy domestic affliction that his own appearance changed permanently to that of a man broken down by age and by cares.

Immediately after the loss of the Empress, Frederick appeared at the Parliament of Barletta, in the deepest mourning, and worn with anguish and anxiety. His appearance aroused the greatest attention, as it seemed to indicate that the preparation of his testament was advisable in every point of view. The assembly in a body witnessed this document, which was ratified by the assent of all present.

Frederick left the Empire and the throne of Sicily, in hereditary succession, to Henry, his eldest son, and, failing him, to the new-born Conrad. He then ordained a Regency; and, having provided for the temporary government of his realm, he set sail on the 28th of June, 1228, with a fleet of forty galleys, besides numerous transports, and a chosen suite of six hundred of his most tried and faithful followers. They arrived at Cyprus on the 24th of July, and waited until the 3rd of September for the absolution the Emperor had expected, but which the obstinate and unforgiving old Pope had determined not to grant. Frederick at last landed at Ptolemais four days later.

Then the great and historical lesson was given to mankind, of the forsaking of the most mighty Christian duty (according to the professed belief of the age), the deliverance of the Sepulchre of the Lord from the pollution of the infidel, in order that party fury should be indulged. The passions of personal hatred and political rivalry effectually outmastered religion and policy. The clergy, and the great religious brotherhoods of the Templars, Teutonic Knights, and Hospitallers, united against Frederick, as if he had come to dissever the Holy Sepulchre

from the Church, instead of reuniting it. In their short-sighted fury, they did not stop to consider the frail tenure their enemy (be he ever so powerful) had of life, and that, once Palestine and Jerusalem ceded, other plans would, by the force of events, supersede those of Frederick—let these be ever so ambitious. It is evident that the *bonâ fide* holding of Jerusalem and Palestine by the See of Rome (brought about by whatsoever means) ought to have been accepted as the very corner-stone of policy. In the savage meanness of a personal triumph Rome lost this great opportunity. It was never granted to it again; and in after days, when the “Orders” had been decimated by torture, disease, and defeat, the Ghibelline writers were perfectly justified in taunting Rome with the blindness of its fury, and the folly of its suicidal opposition to Frederick.

As for Gregory, the infatuated obstinacy of excessive age, on all personal points, renders his persistence intelligible. A writer of the time says: “L’Apostole dit qu’il ne l’absoudrait mie, qu’il ne le tenait mie por Créstien; ains était passé comme faux et traître.”

Gregory IX., in the teeth of all his own and his predecessors’ bulls and briefs as to the dominion of the infidel in Jerusalem and in Palestine, now declared Frederick “to have passed the seas rather as a piratical chief than as a great Emperor,” though he could not possibly doubt his sincerity at that moment as to the raising of the Cross of the Holy Sepulchre. He sent two Franciscan monks direct from Perugia to excommunicate and deprive of civil rights whomsoever, “prince or peasant,” should communicate with the Emperor. These threats struck at the very existence of the Pisan, Genoese, Lombard, and Teuton followers of the latter, all exposed to ruin by the seizure of their property at home by jealous, eager, and greedy rivals, but too desirous of plunder under the excuse of religion. The wary and wise Venetians, of all the Italian cities, had the good policy and the magnanimity to forbear in joining this remarkable and infatuated persecution, thus initiating

that aristocratic and temperate dignity of policy which made the councils of the city celebrated in after times, and which contrast so vividly with the turbulent democracies of the mainland.

The Sultan of Babylon could not long remain in ignorance of the wild dissensions amongst the Christians, and of the isolation in which Gregory had left the Emperor. He therefore concluded that he had overrated the advantages to be derived from his alliance; that he was not to be dreaded as an enemy; and that he would be unable to defend him from the Sultan of Karisman. Whilst, therefore, keeping up the most courteous appearances with the Emperor, and amusing him with missions of Arabian philosophers and poets, he secretly sought a reconciliation with his brother, Malek Aseraf, with whom he had been at variance, on condition that he would join him against their nephew, Nasser Daoud, and that he would cede Southern Syria to him.

Frederick, having been warned of the impending danger, resolved to prevent, if possible, the junction of the Sultan's forces with those of Nasser Daoud. He therefore summoned a Christian council, and proposed to fortify Jaffa as a city of refuge for the Christians of the country. Jaffa is a very important post, thirteen miles from Jerusalem, and that city is wholly dependent on it for provisions. Notwithstanding this, and in spite of the enormous wealth of the Christian religious orders, of the merchants and clergy, we find that the fortifications of Jaffa were in ruin, and the outworks and bastions had been suffered to fall into utter decay.

On this proposition of the Emperor, Peter de Montague (Grand Master of the Templars), Bertrand de L'Orne (Grand Master of the Hospitallers), the patriarchs, bishops, and Oriental barons, as one man, refused to give any assent to it, under the excuse of the "excommunication."

This act on their part merits the most particular attention, as the massacres and sufferings of the Christians at a later date directly resulted from it; and the

great orders rancorously perverting the clear dictates of duty and of Christianity met with an unlamented retribution, as history tells us, later.

For the moment, the triumph of their malignity seemed complete; for Frederick, failing in the effort to bring them to contribute to the cost of repairing the fortifications of Jaffa, began these on his own account; and, meanwhile, departed on his intended journey with a faithful band of about one thousand tried lances—his own adherents, whose honour and fidelity were proof against Papal threats, and who were as hostile to the Pope's party as Gregory was to the Emperor.

This gallant and Imperial act of dignity and courage of Frederick appears to have struck the rest of his army with some sentiments of shame as soldiers; for, dreading the execrations of Western Europe, if, by their cowardice, the Emperor should be slain or overpowered, they resolved on a compromise: they would not acknowledge Frederick as their leader, but they followed his heroic band within eye distance, to keep up appearances and to overawe the Saracens.

This childish arrangement continued till the enemy really appeared, and maltreated the outposts of Frederick's army. Those rabid papists then entered into an understanding with the Emperor, and the latter consenting, for a moment, to lower the Imperial standard, and to rank as a "military commander" only, the combined forces agreed to occupy Jaffa.

Another revolt was threatened, arising from a scarcity of food; but the real genius of the Emperor here again displayed itself. Provisions were procured; a better spirit prevailed; and, triumphing over the rainy season and the hostilities of his Christian brethren, he accomplished, in a great measure, the fortifying of Jaffa before Lent.

Just then, Count Thomas, Grand Marshal of the Empire, wrote an alarming letter to Frederick, telling him his Sicilian kingdom had been invaded, and the inhabitants most barbarously treated, by John of

Brienne, as General of the Pope, and his return was eagerly insisted on. This letter was coupled with warnings concerning the machinations "against him for murder or poison" of his personal enemy, his "father-in-law."

The bold front Frederick showed at Jaffa, in spite of the rancorous enmity of the clergy and of the military orders, and the surprising sight of the rising bastions and walls of Jaffa under the magic of his personal influence, had made the Sultan desirous of renewing negotiations with a prince so well calculated to inspire respect. Frederick was extremely well disposed to accept his overtures. The Arabian chroniclers give the following version of his letter to Malek-Kamil.¹ If they may be trusted, it ran thus:—

"I am thy friend; and well thou knowest how greatly I surpass in power every other potentate in the West. It is thou who hast called me to these parts. The Pope and the other sovereigns are aware of my journey hither; and I would lose all consideration in their eyes should I return to Europe without having attained an object. Moreover, Jerusalem, cradle of the Christian religion, is reduced to a miserable condition, and thy people have pulled down its walls. Restore, therefore, this city, even in its present state, to me, in order that I may keep my head erect amongst sovereigns. I renounce, from this time forwards, every advantage to be derived therefrom."

It is certain that Malek-Kamil sent an ambassador to Jaffa named Salaheddin d'Arbella, with whom a treaty was concluded, beginning with a truce of ten years, 18th of January, 1229.

This Oriental sage, a man of renown as a poet and a philosopher, received the Emperor's oath, and tendered that of his master, in all due form, rendering a strangely graphic account of the transaction to the latter:—

"The accursed chief (or emperor) has promised us a durable peace; *he has drunk in his oath with his right*

¹ Extrait de Dehebi in the "Bibl. delle Crociate" de Reinaud, p. 429.

hand. May he be reduced to gnaw off his left, if he dares to infringe his word.”¹

By virtue of this treaty, Jerusalem, with all the adjacent country, extending on one side to Jaffa, on the other to Bethlehem, Sidon, or Saïda (an excellent post near Damascus, from whence the latter city drew both arms and provisions), the province of Thoron, Nazareth, and the provinces situated between these cities and Ptolemais, were ceded to the Emperor; who was to dispose of them and rebuild the cities as he thought best; whilst the Sultan was to desist from the construction of new fortifications, and from the repair of such as were ruinous. Prisoners were to be freely exchanged without ransom or wrong, and the only advantage claimed by, and granted to, the Moslemites was the continuance of their free worship in the celebrated Mosque of Omar, erected on the site of the ancient Temple of the Jews, and containing the tomb and sanctuary of El-Sahkra, most holy in their eyes.

Three Imans of their faith were to retain custody of it; and pilgrims of their religion were to be allowed free access to its precincts. Christians were also allowed to enter within the Temple, on condition that they conducted themselves with decorum and reverence.

The principalities of Antioch, the county of Tripoli, Tortosa, Castel Bianco el Chrach, and Margat (a stronghold, the chief seat of the Knights Hospitallers), were excluded from the terms of the truce; the Emperor undertaking to respect all territories not falling to him by treaty, and to countenance and aid them from any foes of the Sultan's who should encroach on them.

This wise and advantageous treaty, which offered a safe resting-place for Christian pilgrims, at the price of a moderate concession to Moslemite devotion, and which, if improved in a righteous sense, and accepted as a Providential boon by Rome, might have been the com-

¹ These verses, with a double meaning, give a notion of the taste of those times and countries. “To drink in an oath” signifies to pronounce it with force. (“Lives of Illustrious Men,” by Ibu-Kallikan. The text published by Slane, in 4to, T. i., p. 168.) De Cherrier, *Histoire de la Lutte*, &c., T. ii., p. 74.

mencement of a complete subjection of Asia, in its western side, to Christian civilization, was received with a clamour of hostility, both by the Moslemites and the Christians, which it is important to dwell upon, as it furnishes the key to all the desolation which subsequently so justly fell upon the latter. As it was impossible to deny to the great Emperor the glory of having made the treaty, and of having once more opened the Holy Sepulchre to the adoration of the faithful, the entire fury of Rome and of the Guelphs was turned into the channel of undoing and sweeping away this unequivocal claim to the gratitude of the world. We have with perfect candour pointed out the great crimes and the duplicity of Frederick in many cases; but he was alone in this great struggle after all. We have now the remarkable and incontrovertible historical fact of the Christian Pontiff, his clergy, and the Guelphs spurning the priceless boon of the possession of Jerusalem, which he had been by Divine permission the instrument of conferring on the Christian world. It is, however, impossible, after reading of the impediments in his path, from climate, treachery, fanaticism, jealousy, revolt, and stupidity, not to admit the genius of Frederick of Hohenstauffen in peaceably acquiring Jerusalem, and to consider him to be worthy of the high admiration which has survived the dark shades on his fame.

The Sultan of Damascus naturally refused to sanction a treaty which brought armed Christians to within a day's journey of himself, and, with greater reason, called it "impious and disgraceful." He was the Malek Nasser Daoud who was leagued with the Sultan of Karisman, against whom, in fact, the treaty had been expressly made.

The Mahomedan Imans proclaimed the treaty to be a "public calamity." Truly enough the sufferings of the Mahomedan families, who were obliged to leave Jerusalem (to allow the exiled Christians to return to their own homes), were very great and very affecting. The Imans naturally bore away with them all the silver lamps and rich spoils of the Temple, lest these should fall into the rapacious hands of the Christians. With these rich spoils

they prostrated themselves at the feet of Malek-Kamil, who, however, little touched by their complaints, with characteristic calm, "seized the treasures, and dismissed the suppliants."

As the Moslemites evacuated Jerusalem and the ceded cities, the latter were occupied by the Imperial troops, and throngs of Christians re-entered Jerusalem, from whence their forefathers had been expelled in October, 1187, almost half a century before, a period not long enough to erase family associations, and yet sufficiently so to make thousands pine with the sickness of hope deferred. Great, therefore, was the joy of the Christians. The churches were purified by expiatory ceremonies; new altars were raised where former ones had been destroyed; and every symptom of gladness was shown, as expressed in the ancient prophecies of the Hebrews.

Frederick had made a vow to visit the Holy City as a pilgrim, and, after taking the crown at Jerusalem, to bathe in the waters of the Jordan, and submit to all the forms of penance imposed on pious Christians in those times. He was also deeply anxious for a reconciliation with Rome. So far as time (which has obscured many points of this important period) permits us to observe, Frederick, who bore in mind the ardent desire and struggles of the Popes for the possession of the Holy Sepulchre, and the composure and eagerness with which they sent forth entire nations to endure plague, fire, and famine to secure it, does not seem to have ever been able to realise the folly, as well as the obdurate vindictiveness, of Gregory and his counsellors, now that the holiest of all earthly prizes had really been vouchsafed so providentially to the Church.

But the inexpiable offence of an excommunicated prince, with a mere handful of followers, having succeeded where so many great monarchs had failed, when loaded with Papal benedictions, could not be overlooked at Rome, the measure of whose blind folly and insane rage, politically speaking, was not yet filled.

Frederick charged the Grand Master of the Teutonic

Knights, who had been less hostile to him all along than the other orders of Templars and Hospitallers, to return to Ptolemais, and to lay before the Patriarch the results of the treaty with the Sultan, beseeching him to repair at once to Jerusalem, and, by thus resuming his patriarchal sceptre, to sanction the presence and sanctify the prayers of the faithful in the Holy City.

The Patriarch answered coldly and evasively. He said that there was no guarantee for the safety of the servants of the Church in the treaty, supposing the city should fall into the hands of the Turks. An event far from improbable, as the King of Damascus still refused to ratify the treaty. If such a misfortune were to happen, the blame would not fail to be attributed to him; whilst the Emperor, if it did not take place, would "take to himself alone" the glory of having obtained the prize. To this captious and fretful objection, in which the true ecclesiastical spirit of jealousy spoke out openly, the Patriarch added another, equally unreasonable under the circumstances, but breathing a more intelligible spirit of fanaticism, complaining of the Mosque of Omar being still in the hands of the Saracens. He therefore announced his intention of placing the altars of Jerusalem under an interdict, closing the Holy Sepulchre, and awaiting fresh orders from Rome.

Frederick, in spite of his disappointment, determined to place the crown on his head inside Jerusalem, and on the 16th of March, 1229, he left Jaffa with his troops, accompanied by the Cadi of Naplusia, who was enjoined to keep a strict watch on the Imans of the Mosque of Omar, lest they should create some turbulent riot on their side.¹

Frederick entered Jerusalem amidst a profound stillness; he first adored the Holy Sepulchre, and then wandered away to the Mount Calvary, where he meditated long alone. Who shall penetrate the mystery of that mind in presence of those scenes? The next act of

¹ De Cherrier, *Histoire de la Lutte des Papes*, &c. Vol. ii., Liv. 5, p. 78. This excellent work is well worth consulting by all such as feel curiosity in the history of those times.

Frederick was in harmony with his inconsistent nature ; he was lodged in the mansion of the Cadi, close to the Mosque of Omar, and though the Mahomedan ritual was prohibited, the zealous Imans called their people to prayer with a verse from the Koran, the translation of which is, "Those who say that Christ, the Son of Mary, is God are infidels."¹

The Cadi loyally stopped this infraction of the treaty ; but Frederick declared every man free to follow his own private religion, and added, he did not see why the ritual practised by his own subjects at Lucera should be prohibited in Palestine.

He also became indignant with a Catholic priest, who, without permission, endeavoured to force his way into the Mosque of Omar, with the Gospel in his hand, whilst he was contemplating its magnificence, and ordered him to be driven away. To the Eastern mind fanaticism is always intelligible, even under its grossest and most abject forms ; consequently, the enlightened mind of Frederick, and his desire to protect equally the religious faiths of his subjects, was a mystery and an abomination. The Imans of Omar declared him "no Christian," overhearing some ill-timed and impolitic, but certainly not uncalled-for, jests Frederick made on the grotesque and indecent forms under which religion is shown in the East.²

The coronation of Frederick took place in the Church of the Resurrection, on the 18th of March, 1229. It was a purely military ceremony, none of the German nor Sicilian prelates, being the servants of Gregory, venturing to take part in it. The military order of Teutonic Knights, however, had the manliness of chivalry, and mustered round their Emperor and countryman. A great body of Crusaders filled the church, and even the Archbishop of Palermo and Capua was present. As Frederick and his train entered the church, the altars were stripped of all ornaments, save those of mere earthly royalty, and the Sepulchre of the Lord was veiled in

¹ Koran, translated by Savari, T. i., c. 5, p. 100.

² Abu-Djouzy. "Mirror of the Times," Bib. delle Crociate, p. 432.

funeral draperies. Frederick entered the Choir, took the crown from the altar, and placed it slowly and with dignity on his own brow.¹ After this, he seated himself on a throne, and the Grand Master of the Teutonic Order read aloud the royal message in Latin and in German, the acclamations of the Imperial troops answering throughout the church.

Three days after this great day for the Empire and for Christendom, the perverse malignity of Gregory showed itself in additional storms of cursing, which, by his command, the Archbishop of Cæsarea published throughout the city.

Frederick was constrained to forego his purpose of bathing in a penitential spirit in the Jordan, by receiving warning from the Sultan of a plot laid by the Templars and Hospitallers to assassinate him on his way thither. The fidelity and goodwill of the Sultan contrasted so favourably with the ferocious jealousy and murderous obduracy of the Christians, that Frederick ever afterwards felt and showed a grateful affection for the generous Mussulman.

Frederick had gifted Christianity with the most memorable boon it had received since the days of Godfrey of Bouillon: he had achieved, in the face of persecution and malignity, a personal triumph which time could never rob him of. But he could do no more for the sake of Christianity than he had done, and his presence at home was imperatively needed; he therefore left Jerusalem immediately and repaired to Ptolemais, where the insane fury of the Church vented its spite by placing the town under interdict, and even filling the doorways of the churches with thorns and thistles, to prevent the entrance of the congregations. It was then Lent, and the clergy calculated on a tumultuous riot against the Emperor on the part of a brutally superstitious and fanatic multitude, thus cut off from its accustomed rights.

Frederick seems to have behaved with unusual temper;

¹ Absque ulla benedictione, coronam posuit super altare, deinde super caput suum. (Jordan. Chron., p. 993.)

perhaps the sobering effects of the solemn and awful scenes he had recently visited curbed, in some degree, his passions. He did not fire the churches, as he might readily have done, nor massacre the clergy; he contented himself by causing some Franciscan and Dominican friars, foremost in reviling him, to be caught, stripped, and soundly scourged; a satisfaction to the old Adam which must be allowed to be of a most moderate nature, considering the cowardly, because supposed safe, provocations of these "firebrands."

As a natural consequence to these wholesome lessons, the calumnies and rage of the Pope increased still more.¹ Frederick had informed him of the successful issue of his journey to Palestine; and though the Patriarch denounced him as "wanting in sense from the sole of his feet to the tip of his crown,"² the wiser Court of Rome foresaw that the monarch who had been peaceably crowned in the Church of the Resurrection in Jerusalem was a foe to be dreaded and destroyed, even as Otho IV. had been. The Ghibelline party exulted in the glory of Frederick, as if it had shared his trials and sufferings; and no efforts of the priests of the Guelph faction could quite conceal, though they did their best to dim, the lustre of the event which brought about the return of the Christians to Jerusalem.

The utter deposition of Frederick became thenceforwards the dream of Gregory's last years; but on the Emperor landing in Apulia, on the 10th of June, he found the war rather inclining to his own favour. The Imperial Vicar, Reinald or Ronald, in unjustifiable reprisals for the aggression of John of Brienne, had burst into the territories of the Church, at the head of the Saracens in the Emperor's service,³ and had requited the evil offices of Gregory and his clergy by

¹ 18 August, 1229, Ex Reg. Gregor. IX., Lib. iii., n. 38.

² "In processu ipsius a planta pedis usque ad verticem non potest sanitas inveniri." Epist. Patriarch. ap. Matthew Paris, p. 247.

³ Nov. 30, 1228. Raynald. Annal. Eccl. ad ann. 1228, s. xvi. At Norcia and the Castel del Beisco ecclesiastics were given up to torture and crucifixion at the hands of the Saracens.

a series of horrible cruelties and outrages. The Imperialists even occupied Macerata, and John of Brienne was despatched to meet them, whilst Cardinal Colonna, with another army, moved on the Terra di Lavoro. The Imperialists, thus divided between their fruitful invasion and the fear of losing the more southern territories, hesitated, when the military abilities of Frederick speedily restored his preponderance of power. Finding, however, public opinion still strongly against him, he sent conciliatory messages to the Pope, who had been recalled to Rome by the superstitious terrors of the populace, alarmed at a great and injurious fall of rain, which had generated a pestilential disorder in the city.

Frederick had vanquished in battle the only military commander who could cope with him, John of Brienne, and the latter, humiliated and disheartened, had left Italy for Constantinople, where by one of those romantic turns of fate, common at the time, he closed his life on the throne. In spite of the utmost efforts of the Church, Frederick had covered himself with glory in Palestine, and now almost all the cities in the Kingdom of Naples returned to their allegiance to him.

Notwithstanding the Papal release of the oaths of the great German barons, the Emperor was an enemy too much to be dreaded when victorious, and close at hand, to be altogether despised. Perhaps, too, Gregory, once more within Rome, recollected the power of the Imperial faction to drive him thence; at all events, the preliminaries of a truce were agreed on at Rome between the Archbishop of Reggio and the Grand Master of the Teutonic Order, who acted for Frederick.

The peace was eventually ratified in the principal church of San Germano, where two legates met the Emperor, and, previous to his absolution, administered the oath, binding him "to bend to and obey the will of the Church," and to grant satisfaction for all his previous shortcomings. He granted an amnesty to the German, Lombard, and Tuscan subjects who had rebelled against him, and even to the "foreigners who served the Pope." All sentences

of ban and confiscation were annulled; prompt restitution was promised of the Marches of Ancona, the Duchy of Spoleto, and other lands conquered from the Church, and the promise of refraining from further aggression on them was freely given.

The Templars, Hospitallers, nobles, prelates, and all such as had been forced to emigrate from rebellion against Frederick, were to return freely to the kingdom of Sicily and to the enjoyment of their confiscated estates. It was also covenanted that in future no ecclesiastic was to be judged by a civil court, either in a criminal or secular cause. The clergy were to be free from every tax and imposition, and their election, based on purely canonical principles, was to be exempted from all Imperial interference.¹

As oaths sworn between popes and princes had always been regarded as mere matters of form, binding only as long as convenient, it was stipulated by the Court of Rome that the fortresses of Capua, of three cities and of eight castles, were to be placed under the jurisdiction of the Grand Master of the Teutonic Order, and garrisoned by Papal troops in the Imperial pay, until the terms of the treaty had been satisfactorily fulfilled on both sides. After these terms had been accepted and sworn to, and all the advantages gained by the Tiara, a Dominican monk, Fra Gualo, at length removed the interdict in the name of the Pontiff; and the bells, so long silent, rang out again a joyful peal for Frederick. The latter received absolution in the Chapel of San Guisto, near the bridge of Ceprano, at the hands of the Cardinal de Sabina.

Having been purged from his anathematization, the Pope consented to an interview, and this took place at Anagni, September 1, 1230. Frederick followed exactly the precedent given by his grandfather Barbarossa; he stripped off his imperial mantle, and threw himself at the feet of Gregory.

The conference lasted four days, with every outward appearance of harmony; and *Te Deums* were sung in

¹ Reg. Gregor., Lib. iii., p. 163. Rertz., T. iv., p. 272-274.

thanksgiving for the reconciliation. Frederick even banished his Imperial Vicar Rinaldo and his brother (although the Pope interceded in their behalf), as a guarantee that their savage cruelties had not been sanctioned by him. Their vast properties were confiscated to the state. Probably their influence and great wealth were the real causes of the rigour of Frederick, who had returned from the East determined to rule, uncurbed by too powerful subjects.

The extinction of the sect called "Paterini," who then preached the doctrines which now form the basis of modern society, became the next care of this too far-seeing and intelligent despot; and by his relentless persecution of them—by death, plunder, and torture—he effectually succeeded in preventing them gaining ground in his Kingdom of Sicily. The text of his edict against them runs thus:—

"These perfidious men—these men calling themselves 'Paterini,' that is, men exposed to suffering,¹—seem strenuously engaged in rending God's garment, and making a fearful breach in the Faith. They endeavour to disperse God's sheep, confided to the care of Peter; they introduce themselves on the flock like rapacious wolves, or like adders in the cave of a turtle dove; they are children of perdition, chosen by the father of iniquity, as instruments for the loss of misguided souls; they are ministers to mortals of the poisoned cup of wrath. After they have been tried, if they persist in their heretical errors on due conviction by the ecclesiastical court, they are to be delivered to the Secular Court, and by that to be condemned to be publicly burnt alive, whilst no one is to intercede for their pardon on peril of incurring our most profound displeasure. Again: their accomplices, and even such as harbour or help them, will be cast out from every official employment, and marked by a note of infamy."²

¹ "Patarenos se nominant velut expositos passioni." (*Constitutiones Regni Siciliæ, Lib. i., T. i., p. 6.*)

² *De Hereticis et patarenis. (Constitutiones Regni Siciliæ, Lib. i., T. i., p. 6 in f. Venetiæ, 1560.)*

The persecution of the "Paterini" was carried on with the same relentless barbarity by all the other sovereigns of Europe, and in Rome their extermination was made the personal interest of the highest civil magistrate, the Senator; for one-third of the property of the victims became his by right, and the crime of "leniency" to a culprit was punished by a fine of *two hundred silver marks*.¹ During the minority of Louis IX, of France, Blanche of Castille, the able but sanguinary Regent of that kingdom, had, by "ordonnance"² of 1228, established the Tribunal of the Inquisition for the slaughter of such Albigenses as had escaped Simon de Monfort; and some years later, in 1239, the Count of Champagne burnt alive, at Provins, *one hundred and eighty-four heretics*. But these bloodthirsty savages were in good faith. Frederick acted solely out of worldly policy. He was far superior to the narrowness of the gloomy bigotry of his age; his unremorseful cruelty deserves therefore to be branded with a stigma of peculiar abhorrence, as a crime undertaken in the hope of temporal and personal aggrandisement, and as having about it a meanness which makes it more odious than that of a sincere bigot, honestly persuaded his cruelty and robbery is acceptable to God!

We must now turn to contemplate this versatile monarch in his legislative character; employed, with his friend and counsellor, Pier delle Vigne, in researches of past usages, laws, and traditions, preparatory to the compilation of a code of law for Sicily, which should surpass all heretofore known or remembered.

In the consideration of this question it must be borne in mind that the establishment of a pure despotism was the chimerical but ardent desire of Frederick. It had been that of his predecessors ever since Charlemagne; checked under the reign of Frederick Barbarossa, it revived with gathered force under his grandson. All power,

¹ Capitula contra hereticos, edita in Reg. Gregor. IX., Lib. iv., p. 109.

² Ordonnance du Louvre. (Paris, 1723, folio, T. i., p. 50.)

save his, was to be lowered or destroyed ; and he endeavoured to attain this object, first by the repression of feudal licence and privileges ; secondly, by checking the free development of the burgher rights ; thirdly, by regulating the acquisition of wealth by the clergy.

King Roger, the Norman, had established, some hundred years previously, the precedent of Royal supremacy as final arbitrator in criminal causes ; and many other wise precedents had then been established, though fallen into disuse during the last forty years of anarchy. Frederick had never lost sight of the important question of forming a definite and uniform code, and from the date of his coronation 1220, he had, from time to time, passed ordinances explanatory of his will ; but he now caused his complete new Code to be issued, in which every branch of the public administration was settled, from the political government down to the weights and measures of the Kingdom of Sicily.

Two of the most celebrated jurists of the age, Roffrido da Benevento and Taddeo di Sessa, were invited to take part in the elaboration of this Code ; and it was drawn up by Pier delle Vigne, the celebrated Chancellor, confidant and friend of Frederick, his most able minister and most sagacious adviser, and one of the four judges of the Supreme Court of Capua.

This minister, so able, so accomplished, and so unfortunate, deserves more particular notice at our hands. He was of very humble origin ; and born at Capua about the year 1190. He early displayed great talents and an indomitable thirst for knowledge ; he worked his way by sheer mendicancy to the University of Bologna, where he became so remarkable as to attract the notice of the Archbishop of Palermo and of Frederick, who possessed the unfailing instinct of genius in the discerning of the same quality in his subordinates. It is said that Pier delle Vigne was even raised to the important office of prothonotary at the Court of Sicily so early as 1212, when he was but twenty-two years of age. It is certain he was not only profoundly versed in Roman and Canon

law and the Longobard procedure, but a thorough master of the lighter graces of Latin literature; and that he composed verses in the native Italian language, then dawning into favour with the great, at the Court of Frederick.

Pier delle Vigne was essentially a man of practical ability, and therefore admirably fitted to compile a Code which had the distinct aim in view of curbing the lawlessness of the nobles, and of restraining the exactions and the enormous wealth of the clergy.¹ Thirty years afterwards this Code served Louis IX. of France as a model for the composition of his statute laws.

The arbitrary oppression of feudalism was prohibited in it; the right of suing his superior was first granted to a vassal, and if his complaint was admitted as just, and regarded (as it generally did) as "seizure of property," he was entitled to *full restitution*, and, as amends, the payment of double the value of the sum robbed from him was exacted.

The great feudal vassals were prohibited from contracting alliances by marriage for themselves, or their daughters, without the consent of the sovereign.² The sons and daughters of nobles were entitled to an equal share in their fathers' portion, and in default of male heirs, females were entitled to the whole property of their fathers' feudal possessions.

The nobles were subjected to the royal jurisdiction, and two witnesses of their own rank were sufficient to give evidence against them; double the number of witnesses were required if of inferior rank. Thus four barons were considered equal to two counts, to eight knights, and to sixteen burghers.

The testimony of the mere peasantry against a "noble"

¹ The Code comprises three Books; there are 552 headings or titles, and 290 decrees. Forty-two of these date from the reign of Roger I., twenty-three to those of the two Williams, the Bad and the Good, and 225 are Frederick's own. With but few modifications, this Code has formed the basis of the Legislature of the Southern Provinces of Italy from that time to our own.

² We find this law or custom in full force in France at the Court of Louis XIV.

was not accepted, and no one could be elected to the military orders of knighthood unless of noble birth, or by an exceptional and direct decree emanating from the Crown.

Judicial combat was strictly prohibited, save in two cases—death from an unknown hand, and the crime of *Lèse Majesté*. The rights of making peace and war at will, and of private vengeance, were abolished, also that of bearing arms, and all the special prerogatives of the feudal lords.

The strictest penalties and heavy taxes were inflicted on such as eluded the laws; and none save the officers of Court and those engaged in the king's service were exempted from them. If the criminal was insolvent he was sent to the galleys; a wound was avenged by the loss of the hand that had inflicted it; if death ensued, the murderer was decapitated if noble, and hanged if a burgher or a peasant.

Ecclesiastics were declared incapable of holding the offices of justice or bailiffdoms. In order to check the enormous accumulation of wealth of the clergy, churches, religious confraternities, priests and clerks were prohibited from buying land, and of accepting lands by testament, save on condition of selling them within a year afterwards. The Knights Templars and Hospitallers were not exempted from this law, and all lands left unsold after the legal period were confiscated for the benefit of the state.

Frederick then turned his attention to the Italian communes. He deprived these of the right of naming their Podestà and Consuls, and appointed Imperial bailiffs and magistrates to rule instead; in case of disobedience, rebels were to be hanged, and the commune to be liable to the plunder of the Imperial followers, and to the infliction of arbitrary impositions.

These punishments for rebellion were, however, counter-balanced by great and wise laws for the loyal cities. Burghers were to fix the amount of their own taxes and public burdens; or had at least a clear right to be called into consultation for the edicts that decreed these; they

were also to be considered worthy of being heard in Parliament on points of finance and law. As the general routine of tranquillity and of the payment of taxes depended upon holders of property and the communes, these were held responsible for the execution of common law, and severely fined if criminals were allowed to escape the confines of each commune with impunity, or by carelessness and connivance. The fine for the murder of a Christian was one hundred "augustales," equivalent to fifteen hundred and seventy-eight francs, and half the sum for a Jew or a Saracen. The plunder of vessels wrecked on the coasts was prohibited.

Merchants selling by false weights were condemned to pay a fine of an ounce of gold (or sixty-three francs, twelve centimes) for the first offence, and to lose the hand on the second; if a third offence was proved, the unjust seller was hanged by the neck.

Coiners, incendiaries, and all who altered or prevaricated the letter and intent of the royal laws, were punished by death. Blasphemers of God and the Virgin were deprived of their tongues.

False accusers underwent the penalties they fraudulently sought to bring upon the innocent.

Every Christian convicted of usury had his goods confiscated. The Jews only were privileged to lend money at interest. The legal tax on money was ten per cent.

It became necessary by law to obtain a patent from the university of Salerno to practise medicine and pharmacy; and one uniform standard of weights was established throughout the realm. The attributes of high executive justice were distributed thus: the Bailiff, or *baiulo*, examined the proceedings in minor criminal cases; the Chief Justice or "Maestro-Giustiziere," assisted by a judge and by a chancellor in every province, exercised the supervision of the police, carried on inquests and inquiries, and inspected the portion of territory under their dependence.

¹ "De poena calumnie contra calumniatores stabilita." (Lib. ii., tit. 14.)

The High Criminal Court of Appeal sat at Capua, under the decision of four judges and one Chief Justice, whose decision was law throughout the realm. This great court of supreme appeal superseded all former feudal courts and rights of feudal rulers in the administration of the law; Prelates, Counts, Barons, and Knights were prohibited from all interference with its jurisdiction and with meddling in all criminal cases.¹

Frederick, who had, when not under the influence of his evil passions, all the ability and foresight of a great sovereign, maintained the most friendly relations with the Soldan of Egypt, the Mussulmans of Syria, the Caliph of Bagdad, and the Greeks of Trebizond. He thus ensured many lucrative privileges to his subjects who traded in the East. He established good commercial treaties with these countries, by which the accumulated grain in the royal stores could be exchanged for other merchandise.

Whilst thus fostering and encouraging the material wealth of his kingdom, Frederick looked jealously on the advance of free thought, and of every privilege of the great burgher classes of Northern Italy; but as it was politic to foster that much oppressed class in the South, he called a parliament at Foggia, in Capitanata, where the burghers were admitted for the first time.

Each city or borough sent two *Buoni uomini*, or burghers of substance and repute, as delegates. These were summoned that they "might have the enjoyment of the Emperor's presence, and convey his orders to their townfolk." But in Friuli, Ravenna, many parts of Germany, and the Ghibelline towns of Northern Italy, Frederick did not seem to be assured that the first proposition of the above quaint summons would ensure the second, in the sense he intended it, for he published the following decree against the communal corporations in the year 1232:—

"Inasmuch as detestable habits have been established

¹ "Quod nullus prelati, com. baro officium justiciarum gerat." Lib. i., tit. 49. *Novæ Constitutiones Regni Siciliae*.

in certain parts of Germany, it is our duty to impede these pernicious innovations from being perpetuated ; we, therefore, abolish every commune and every council, every league and every association, formed without our consent, and that of the bishops. We revoke the charges of the Municipal Magistrates, Rectors, and Officers elected by the inhabitants. Lastly, we annul the privileges granted to the communes by our predecessors, by us, by the bishops, by the cities, and by private individuals, to the prejudice of Princes and of the Empire.”¹

Rigorous measures having followed against municipal liberties, even in the Southern Provinces, many cities, including Messina, revolted. The rebellion was suppressed with much cruelty ; and, under the pretext of “ heresy,” many faithful Christians expired at the stake. Frederick and his son were equal foes to any power not their own ; and to enforce their despotism, they favoured their Saracenic forces—always a thorn in the eye of the Pope—and even tolerated their employing the materials of a Christian town, dismantled and abolished for rebellion, to improve and fortify Lucera ; though there were timbers and columns of churches amongst the ruins thus misapplied. Amidst mutual insults and rancorous feuds, a grand court was convoked at Ravenna, where the feudal lords and deputies from the provinces were summoned to meet and to deliberate on the pacification of affairs. The Pontiff, anxious for the soothing of the angry rage of both parties, had himself suggested this assembly.

The disposition of the Guelphs was so uncompromisingly hostile, however, that no possible good could arise from it. The Pope was more infuriated than ever against the Emperor, on account of his recent laws against the accumulation of wealth by the clergy ; consequently, no real support could be expected from him to any Ghibelline proposal, and Frederick boldly avowed

¹ Apud Ravennam, mense Januarii, 1232, pro Brema, Colonia et Wormatia. Luigi Reichsarchiv. T. ix., p. 441. Apud Aquilegiam, mense Aprili, pro Maguntia, Treveri, Ratisbona, &c.

his determination to crush the rising independence of the communes, by cancelling the treaty of Constance.

The Lombards once more, therefore, appealed to arms. The Confederates of the League met at Bologna in the year 1231: two cardinals attended the meeting; ostensibly as mediators, but in reality as delegates of the Roman Guelphs. It was agreed that three thousand horse, fifteen hundred archers, and ten thousand infantry should be enrolled, and the expenses paid by the confederation. But in spite of these warlike threats, great efforts were still made by Gregory to prevent the actual commencement of hostilities, and finally two Cardinal Legates met the Emperor at Padua, for the purpose of reconciling the Milanese faction to him.

With the apparent consent of both parties, the Pope was chosen as Umpire, and a hollow truce was agreed upon, merely for the sake of convenience to both sides, who were equally insincere. The Pope, of course, leant to the Guelphs; at which Frederick affected great surprise, complaining of his "leniency to rebels."

The chief leader of the Ghibellines was the able but ferocious Ezzelino da Romano, a great favourite of the Emperor; he had lately possessed himself of Verona, and thus protected the descent of the Germans over the Alps. The Marquis of Este, the Guelph leader, hated Frederick with an ungovernable bitterness, and his chief object was to wrest Verona from Ezzelino, who aimed at extending his dominion over Padua, Vicenza, and the long line of powerful frontier cities which ensured free passage to the Imperialists.

As a last resource, the Pontiff sent forth emissaries charged to preach peace, amongst whom the most celebrated was Fra Giovanni di Schio, or, as he was more generally called, "Da Vicenza;" a man of great eloquence and learning, a Dominican. He was successful in Tuscany, but created in Lombardy a singular, though momentary, fervid enthusiasm. The chroniclers of the time write that above four hundred thousand persons assembled, chiefly barefoot, on the plain of Paquara,

three miles from Verona, to hear his sermon on Peace. The Carrocci of the different cities were drawn up on the field; prelates, abbots, nobles, burghers, attended with the mixed multitude, and, after the Latin sermon, exchanged the kiss of peace. Fra Giovanni launched anathemas at whosoever should break the bond of harmony, and proposed a union between the son of the Marquis of Este, Rinaldo, and the daughter of Alberico da Romano, the nephew of Ezzelino; a proposition which was acceded to. Fra Giovanni was named Master of Vicenza, and Duke and Rector of Verona; but his outrageous excesses and savage cruelty against the "Paterini" (he burnt sixty persons in three days in Verona)¹ raised so great a tumult against him that he was compelled to fly to Vicenza, where he gave every licence to his own party to plunder and burn the property of his adversaries. The latter proving too strong for him, he was taken prisoner, and banished from Vicenza; thus, within a month of the peace of Paquara, he relapsed into obscurity, returned to his cloister at Bologna, and there ended his days.

At the period of this strange mission, when peace and persecution were blended with the true logic of the Dominicans, a sudden storm overclouded the destiny of Gregory IX. During eleven years disputes had waxed strong between the cities of Rome and Viterbo. The latter city had ever been highly favoured by the Pope, to whom it was ever faithful; whereas the Romans sometimes banished and sometimes recalled him. But in the month of March, 1232, a peaceful treaty was drawn up, and the Pontiff was received in Rome with every demonstration of the most rapturous joy. He then offered to become mediator between Rome and Viterbo; but the Senator of Rome, under the plea of the famine then raging all over Italy (in consequence of a year of disastrous weather, and of ravages of wild beasts), raised new impositions on the property of the clergy, which they (always asserting their right to exemption from contributing to the public welfare) resisted angrily. Maddened with hunger and rage, the

¹ Chronic. Veronese, p. 627.

common people rose also in Rome, sacked the palaces of the wealthier cardinals, and even attacked the palace of the Lateran; their passions speedily became so inflamed with plunder and want, and by the awful severity of the weather,¹ that Gregory IX. was once more compelled to retreat to Rieti; from whence he launched his anathema against the Senator of Rome and the people, and wrote letters to the sovereigns and prelates of Europe, seeking aid against oppression.

He claimed the assistance of Frederick amongst the rest, as the Romans threatened the siege of Viterbo, and would gladly have doomed it to the fate of ancient Tusculum—have obliterated from the world even the remains of its walls and edifices.

The treacherous and evil conduct of Henry, Vicar-General of the Empire, had made his father Frederick of late deeply and justly uneasy; and he was, therefore, not averse to answering promptly and favourably the appeal of the Pope, hoping to assure himself of the support of the latter against his ungrateful and rebellious son. He marched up from Apulia with his infant son, Conrad, in his train, presented him to the Pope, and then sent him back in safety to his own kingdom; whilst he himself undertook the defence of Viterbo, with the aid of the Pontifical troops, under the command of the Count of Toulouse and the Bishop of Winchester.

The campaign was commenced by cruel devastation of the country; but the allied forces found a greater difficulty in subduing the stronghold of Rocca Rispanpani, a great fortress near Toscanella; before which they lost fruitlessly much time.

The novel alliance of the Pontiff and the Emperor threw the Guelph party into the greatest alarm. Notwithstanding all the assurances of the Pontiff that he had never wavered in his fidelity to them, they refused to grant passage to the German Papal auxiliaries across the Alps into Italy; and began a series of active negotia-

¹ "The cold was so intense that the Lagoons froze hard, and men walked from the mainland to Venice." Chron. Ephord., 256.

tions in Germany with the foes of Frederick ; and an army of seven thousand horse, besides many foot, was quartered in Milan, under the command of captains sworn, under the most solemn oaths, to prefer death rather than submission to the Emperor.¹

A frivolous pretext soon sufficed to kindle war ; the Milanese seized on and appropriated an elephant and several dromedaries sent by the Emperor, under strong escort, to Cremona. Modena joined with the latter city, and Bologna leagued with Milan ; the old grudges between that city and Cremona not being yet extinguished.²

Henry, the unworthy and incapable son of Frederick, had entered into a league with the Guelphs, even after having received from his father a full pardon for all his former great and many offences ; but the greater portion of the nobles of the Empire met in a Diet at Friuli, and pledged themselves as answerable for his conduct. Checked by a portion of the nobility in the direction of Italy, Henry turned his views towards the north-western frontier, and gained over many of the Rhenish prelates and Imperial cities, to which he granted, in defiance of the express commands of his father, charters of enfranchisement : and thus civil war was once more awakened in Germany. The late Duke of Bavaria, assassinated by the agents of the so-called " Old Man of the Mountain," had been a warm supporter of Frederick, and his successor followed the same party. His domains were now invaded simultaneously by Henry, on the north, and by the Duke of Austria, on his side. The Kings of Bohemia and Hungary also rushed to oppose him ; and, to complete the anguish of the suffering population in Germany, religious prosecution aided temporal vengeance, and consigned hundreds of meek and admirable Christians to the stake and to torture, under the merest excuses or pretexts of heresy. Nobles, burghers, peasants, and even ecclesiastics,

¹Annal. Mediol. cap. 3, Murat. lvi., p. 643.

²Two hundred years later Cremona was utterly sacked, burnt, and destroyed by the Milanese under Sporza Attendolo.

were, we are told, seized by the irresponsible tribunals, summarily judged and condemned; ¹ their property confiscated, and their names made infamous. "A single day," says an historian of the times, "was sufficient to carry out the accusation, excommunication, final sentence, and execution of the culprits. . . . The judgments given without any prior notice, and admitting of no preparation for defence, were irrevocable; no appeal could be attempted or made."

The rebellion aroused by these butcheries compelled the King of the Romans to convoke a Diet at Frankfort, and the majority of the nobles and prelates met there April the 10th, 1234. They loudly declared themselves to be adverse to the ecclesiastic tyranny, reigning in blood and confiscation, and proposed an appeal to the Pope.

Frederick, on hearing of the civil conflicts in Germany, published an edict threatening punishment on whomsoever bore arms, if within a month he had not taken the oath of loyalty to the Empire. He likewise cancelled the notes of franchisement granted illegally by Henry, and threatened the severest chastisement in case of disobedience.

Henceforth Frederick and his son were at open warfare. Henry was in every respect guilty of the extremes of disobedience, bad faith, and rebellion, but his name, and indeed these very crimes, made him an invaluable ally to the Guelph party. The Milanese went so far as to offer him the iron crown of Italy, which they had pertinaciously refused to his father for fifteen years. In the year 1234, Anselm von Justingen, the chief marshal of Henry, and Walter de Thaunberg, his chaplain, were sent as his plenipotentiaries to Milan, where they were met by the large majority of the delegates from the confederate cities and their allies.

A definitive treaty was settled December the 7th; the

¹ Ann. 1233. Propter veras hæreses et propter fictas, multi nobiles et ignobiles clerici, burgenses, rustici perierunt. Godefr. Colon., p. 365, 15 Julii, 1233. Reg. Gregor., Lib. vii., p. 244.

² Godefr. Colon., p. 265.

Guelph cities submitted to take the oath of fealty to the King of the Romans. They promised to defend his person, honour, and power, on condition that they should not be called upon to make sacrifices in money or hostages, that they should not be required to furnish troops out of Lombardy, and that their League should continue to be respected and maintained. This very qualified allegiance was also to be fostered at the expense of Henry, who promised to "defend them from all their enemies," and to make neither peace nor truce without their consent. This contract was to be renewed upon oath every ten years.

When we read of treaties with clauses like the above, absolutely untenable, and which both parties must have known to be so, we are reduced to consider them as mutual contracts based upon a common intention to deceive and betray; but their perpetual recurrence makes it evident that even these hollow truces had immediate advantages, however momentary, the benefits of which were considerable enough to outweigh the shame of perjury and the peril of duplicity.

Henry, thus strengthened in Lombardy, published a manifesto of rebellion in Germany, and leagued himself closely with his brother-in-law, the young Duke of Austria. He opened a Diet at Boppard, near Coblenz, with the view of obtaining the open support of the Rhenish prelates; and in this he was partly successful. Heretofore he had met no opposition to his great scheme of overt rebellion, and deemed himself on the eve of supplanting his father, when Hermann of Baden, the faithful friend of the latter, undertook the defence of his interests, and the chastisement of the guilty son.

Frederick had been unsuccessful against the fortress of Rocca Rispampani, and had retired to Apulia, having, notwithstanding this check, rendered Gregory such substantial aid that his enemies were glad to submit themselves to make a truce with him. Thus in the beginning of the following year, 1235, the Roman Senator, Angelo Malabranca, stipulated, in the name of the Senate and

people, "not to lay further imposts on churches and ecclesiastics, either within or without the city of Rome, and to restore and reintegrate such damages as were complained of by the Holy See." ¹ It was also stipulated that in future no priest or monk should be judged by the secular courts. This exemption included the menial servants of the Pope and Cardinals. Thus was peace temporarily made between the Imperialists, who acted for the Pope, and the Romans. Viterbo, and all the cities on which the Pontiff had pretensions, were included in the letter of the above treaty.

Gregory then busied himself in organising a new Crusade, as fresh troubles had broken out in the East; the sullen and ungracious repelling of the inestimable boon of the Holy Land, which Frederick had conquered for the Church, having borne its natural fruits.

Frederick was applied to, amidst the other sovereigns; though the Pope owed him an absurd grudge for his check before Rocca Rispampani, and taxed him with lukewarmness, in spite of his being once more sovereign in Rome by his aid. Frederick seemed inclined to listen favourably to the project of another expedition into the East, when he was joined at Foggia by the faithful Margrave of Baden, who disclosed to him the plan of the great rebellion in Germany, and all its appalling details. It was then the month of November, 1234, and arms could not be employed at that season north of the Alps; but Frederick lost not a moment in appealing to the honour and allegiance of the great feudal nobles of the Empire, and in levying a war imposition on his own Italian kingdom. He also entreated the aid of the Church in so just a cause. The Pope gladly afforded him the favour he desired, all the more that he had been the firm supporter of the inquisition, and of religious persecution practised in the name of Rome.

Gregory prohibited the prelates and grandees of Germany from favouring the King of the Romans "in the

¹ Et familiæ D. Papæ et Cardinalium. Statuta pacis, ex Reg. Gregor. IX. ann. 9, numero 122.

work of iniquity he had undertaken, undermining thus all laws, human and divine." The Bishops of Augsburg and Würzburg, who sided with Henry, were summoned to appear before the Ecclesiastical Court within the term of two months; and he broke off all communication with the young King, whom he caused to be excommunicated in his name by the Archbishop of Salzburg; and, by his decided condemnation of the intended rebellion, he contributed greatly to diminish the danger of its being declared.

Frederick left Capitanata after Easter, 1235. He was well provided with money, but he wisely took with him only a few tried friends besides the necessary escort. He conveyed his infant son, Conrad (then seven years old), to the friendly Court of Bavaria, where he was presented to the barons of the Empire, and affianced to the daughter of the Duke, Elizabeth, the future mother of the hapless Conradin. She was then a child, about the same age as Conrad, being in her eighth year; but she grew up a princess of extreme beauty, wisdom, and of rare prudence in the counsels she gave—only to find them, alas, rejected!

Seventy barons and their followings joined Frederick at Ratisbon; and this prompt display of allegiance seems, from the first, to have intimidated the rebels; they retired behind the walls of their fortresses, carrying with them hostages from the cities which had favoured them, lest the latter should join the Emperor. But Frederick, without a moment's delay, attacked and reduced ten of the chief of these strongholds; and the hopes of the weak and wicked Henry gave way, as his best troops were slaughtered or disbanded. He employed the Grand Master of the Teutonic Order to plead for him; but Frederick insisted on his appearing in person, and publicly acknowledging his offences. He therefore repaired to Worms, July 4th, 1235, so rapid had the victories of his father been, and made the required submission. Frederick granted life and forgiveness, but could not, with any regard for his crown and safety, leave in the

hands of an unprincipled and thankless son the power of further working to undermine it. He was detained in an honourable captivity ; attempting to escape from this, he was captured, placed in the castle of Heidelberg, in the custody of his great foe, the Duke of Bavaria (whose dominions, it will be remembered, he invaded and ravaged in an unprovoked and barbarous manner) ; and even then persevering in attempts at rebellion, and in evasions of his engagements to deliver his strong fortress of Trifels and others he held, the Emperor finally determined to depose and banish him.

Henry was conveyed in close custody to Apulia, and confined to the castle of San Felice, in custody of the Marchese Lancia. We only hear of this erring and unhappy prince once more. It is stated he was left in so forsaken a condition that his clothes were worn to shreds on his person, and an order from Frederick provides his son with "new and more decent raiment."

No apology or sympathy can be made for, or created in favour of, Henry, whose bright career was closed in ignominy and in exile ; his clearest interests lay in the broad, open path of duty ; for, as we have seen, Frederick himself forsook the solid glory to be easily obtained by ruling well his German Empire, in behalf of a visionary southern kingdom, only to be attained by incessant duplicity and disingenuous evasions of his compacts with Rome ; and he left his son from the earliest years virtually sovereign of the Empire.

The folly of Henry, no less than his culpable ingratitude in throwing away prospects so brilliant, amply justifies the act of exclusion Frederick finally pronounced against him. Domestic treason thus quenched, Frederick's posterity was dependent on the fragile tenure of one infant life, and he formed the design of marrying again. Having ascertained that Louis IX., King of France, would feel no umbrage at his marrying Isabel of England, and that the Pope warmly approved of the union, the Duke of Brabant and Pier delle Vigne were

sent to England in February, 1235, to ask the hand of the young and beautiful princess.

The demand was made in state in the Hall of Westminster; and the bride came with a great train from her "Palace Tower" (for she inhabited the Tower of London), after three days had been passed, for form's sake, in deliberation; Pier delle Vigne placed the ring on her finger, and hailed her as the Imperial bride of Frederick. The title was repeated with loud acclamations by the barons of England assembled in the hall, and the princess soon after began her journey to her new Empire.

The chronicles of the time dwell with minuteness and complacency on the magnificence of her wedding apparel and of her horse furnitures. Three thousand knights escorted her to Canterbury, where she visited and prayed at the shrine of St. Thomas a'Becket; and finally she departed from the port of Sandwich. At Antwerp, where she landed, she was received with great rejoicings, and these were renewed at all the wealthy and hospitable Belgian cities; but at Cologne ten thousand citizens went out to meet her at a great distance from the town, and entertained her with jousts and tilting matches, whilst the bells were all rung, and the clergy, in long file, with cross and crosier, poured out to welcome her.

The sweet strains of the Minnesingers so charmed the Princess, that she hired a band of these minstrels to follow her throughout her remaining journey. Not content with the above friendly and courteous greeting, the citizens of Cologne had provided a "right goodly and marvellous" show of boats, apparently passing over a wavy sea of silken stuffs, and carried by horses hidden below the draperies: choruses and glees were sung by bands provided with pleasant instruments of music inside these boats, and formed a ravishing spectacle. The houses were hung with tapestries and adorned with wreaths of flowers and of foliage. The Princess showed, on her part, a kindly sense of the grateful feelings she experienced for this hospitality; for, being informed that the fair sex of Cologne were excessively anxious to behold

her face, she gracefully took off hood and veil, and rode through the city with her head uncovered, in order to enable all classes of women to satisfy fully their curiosity ; by which act she gained all hearts.¹

Isabel met the Emperor at Worms on the 15th of July ; the marriage ceremonies were performed in presence of four kings, eleven dukes, thirty counts or marquises, many great prelates, and a crowd of notabilities. But a singular trait of the manners of the age must not be omitted : the *stars* were also consulted before the wedding, and auguries were pronounced in favour of the day and hour ; the promise of a son was also given by the stars.

It is pleasing to read, as a proof of the improved refinement of taste in the festivities, which lasted four days, that buffoons and mimics were not admitted before the bridal couple ; the amusements consisted chiefly of poetry and music, Trouvères and Minnesingers contended for rich prizes, and all wore an aspect of the most perfect joy. After which the English train of Isabel returned to their own country with rich gifts ; amongst which were three leopards and other Oriental curiosities.

The subsequent Diet of Mayence was held with the same infinite splendour. A grand Court of the Empire was summoned. Frederick I. had held also another grand Court after the Peace of Constance, with extraordinary pomp. His son Henry, on that occasion, had been knighted and crowned King of the Romans. Now, instead, in the Court held by Frederick II., the formal deposition of his son Henry was made known to the nobles and prelates, and ratified, unopposed, by them.

At this grand Court, Frederick made friends with Otho of Brunswick and the Guelph faction of Germany ; he ceded in feud to Otho the domains of Brunswick, Lüneburg, and other allodial territories belonging to the Guelphs, over which he was to reign, under the title of Hereditary Duke ; the title to remain in his family, and to be inherited by females, as well as males. Tithes were

¹ De Cherrier, Vol. ii., p. 130. Matt. Paris, p. 284.

also to be granted to him from the stronghold of Goslar, as they had been to his father in the year 1204. Satisfied with these concessions, Otho renounced all the other claims, under pretence of which his uncle had betrayed Barbarossa.

Frederick then caused an inquiry to be made into the reasons of the Germans for the discontent which had so nearly cost him his Empire, and framed a constitution of sixteen articles, re-confirming certain laws and usages which the turbulence of parties had set aside, and many new and wise laws were added to the old. The "Wehrgeld," or price of blood, was abolished: this was a barbarous and invidious fine, allowing the gratification of the lawless violence of murder, according to a scale of penalties proportioned to the rank of the victims.

The custom of judicial combat was also abolished, and regular tribunals were formed for the judicial examination of personal evidence. It was furthermore established that "Whosoever should take arms against his father, or make alliances with his father's enemies, or who conspired against his life, or connived at his mutilation or loss of personal liberty, should lose all right to his paternal or maternal inheritance, and be given over to the mercy of the sovereign."

On the strength of this law the deposition of Henry, King of the Romans, was formally pronounced. To cut off the more completely all chance of his ever succeeding him, Frederick confirmed the Electoral rights of the princes of the Empire, against which the aim of the Hohenstauffen had always been to oppose hereditary right. This was done in the hope of retaining in their house the highest honour to be obtained then in the existing world.

Meantime the affairs of Italy again demanded the attention of the Emperor. We have seen how the Peace of Paquara was followed by the most atrocious religious persecution, and how, by the preaching of Giovanni da Vicenza, the faggots were lighted in every city, to consume the unoffending "Paterini." These at last rose in a

righteous attempt at vengeance, and retaliated on their inhuman executioners with all the fury of prolonged despair.

At Mantua they pursued the bishop to the foot of the altar, tore him from the sanctuary, and crucified him with all the agonies of humiliation he and his party had heaped on them.

Religious and political hatred, and the convulsions of nature which aggravated the physical misery of the inhabitants, brought Lombardy at this time to a lower state than it had previously been, in spite of the great efforts of the wiser and better spirits to soothe the fury of rapacity, malignity, and revenge, and to divert the energies of their countrymen into the lawful pursuits of commerce, science, and arts. Gregory, as was natural, leaned towards the Guelph cities, and sought to obtain for them that preponderance which would establish them as the national party. He therefore used his best efforts in trying to bring about peace; or, at least, a show of some mutual forbearance in a common interest which affected the fortunes and lives of all the townsmen equally.

Gregory was then at Perugia, having been again constrained to leave Rome, and some preliminary conferences were held there, but the general Italian Assembly met at Brescia, where a new peace, or rather Guelph league, was sworn to, with new oaths; and an important point was signified to the world—that the funds of the League were to be lodged within the strong, safe walls of the friendly maritime republics of Genoa or Venice.

Ezzelino da Romano, to counteract this Guelph League, spared no effort to reinforce the Ghibelline interest, and in this he met with an ardent response in Germany, which was now loyal beyond all former precedent, a convincing proof of the extraordinary genius of Frederick II., when his great abilities were directed in a lawful channel.

The Duke of Austria, who had fomented rebellion, and aided the now-deposed Henry, late King of the Romans, in every way, had been placed under the ban of the Empire at the Diet of Coblenz, and the chief contingent

forces of the Imperialists were employed in attacking his domains: but Frederick levied, without difficulty, reinforcements in Alsace and Swabia, and with three thousand horsemen he descended by Inspruck and Trent into Lombardy. The Milanese, who were the heart and soul of the Guelphic League, had assembled their forces to the amount of fifty thousand men, and sallied forth with their Carroccio to Brescia, hoping to bar the road to Cremona. But they were unsuccessful. The Imperialists cut out for themselves a road, marked by devastation and fire, by way of Mantua, Marcara, and Pontevico on the Oglio; and in Cremona Frederick remained, till October, 1235.

Shortly after the passage of Frederick, we find the Marquis of Este, his inveterate and rancorous foe, in the field, with the men-at-arms of Vicenza, Treviso, Padua, and Camino, against Ezzelino da Romano, and his more practised Ghibellines. In this duel, so to speak, between these formidable feudal foes, Ezzelino had the dreadful triumph of ravaging Vicenza with a ferocity that called down pity and blame, even in that sanguinary age, and which caused Frederick to issue a decree of pardon generally to all rebels; but he left Vicenza, as of right by conquest, under the rule of Ezzelino.

At the moment the triumph of the Ghibellines seemed assured, Frederick was counselled to return to Germany to assure the submission of Austria, and to advocate the interests of his infant son, Conrad, whom he purposed to have elected King of the Romans. His departure from Vicenza was marked by one of those curious and childish traits of superstition which were so common in the age.

He believed devoutly in astrology and in the power of man to divine the future by reading the stars, a belief which, four hundred years later (and in an age incomparably more civilized), was firmly held by another great captain, Wallenstein; he therefore consulted his Astrologer-in-Chief by which gate he should leave the city. The answer was written and sealed up; not to be opened until he was in the open country. Frederick marched out by a breach in the walls; and on opening the scroll,

he found written, "per porta nova" ("by a new gate"). This confirmed his belief in the prophetic powers of Master Theodore, who was termed the "Imperial Philosopher," and who consulted the stars on all occasions for his Imperial master, indicating propitious days and hours, for the undertaking of great schemes. To these celestial powers, he did not disdain to add (whimsically enough) the purely material ones of preparing dainties with his own hands for the table of the Emperor! These curious traits of human life attach us with a human interest to the departed great, who might otherwise pass almost into the elevated but less interesting region of fable.

Frederick was received at Vienna with marks of the greatest honour, and to conciliate the clergy he assumed the, to him, unwonted character of their protector. He undertook to preserve churches and monasteries from pillage, and he confirmed their ancient privileges. His son Conrad was proclaimed his successor; eleven electors voted for him: the Archbishops of Mayence, Treveri, and Salzburg; the Bishops of Ratisbon, Bamberg, Freisingen, and Passau; the Count Palatine of the Rhine, the Landgrave of Thuringia, and the Duke of Corinthia, with the King of Bohemia.¹

He then visited the Rhenish provinces, made a splendid entry into Spire, where a preponderating majority of the princes of the Empire awaited him, and finding them all equally favourable to Conrad, the child was proclaimed King of the Romans in lieu of the deposed Henry.

The utter unworthiness of the latter, and his just exclusion from the Empire, is unanswerably proved by all the circumstances of his conduct. We have seen the complete powers vested in him by his father; the leniency with which errors, the presumable fruits of youth and inexperience, were treated; and the absolute power that lay in his hands, and of which he might have made use to endear himself to a nation disposed to resent the preference his

¹ *Filius suus Conradus adhuc puerum, prius in Austria regem Teutoniæ designatum, denuo ab ipsis obtinet approbari. Godefr. Colon, p. 370.*

father manifested for the Italian provinces. Opportunities and advice and lessons of time were, however, equally lost on this weak and wicked youth; and the mere appearance of his able and majestic sire recalled wavering loyalty, overawed rebellion, conciliated feuds, appeased clamours, and extinguished for ever his filial misconduct and domestic treachery.

The commanding genius of the greatest of the Hohenstauffens again shone in a legitimate and worthy cause, engaged in remodelling the civil constitution of the Empire; but the flaw that invaded it—the passion for a still wider and more despotic rule—soon made it almost nugatory to benefit himself or his subjects; for, strong in the pride of the ascendant Ghibelline party in Germany, Frederick again turned his restless, haggard eyes on the bright but adverse plains of Lombardy. After the peace of Paquara, troubles began again with greater force in Romagna, Tuscany, and Lombardy; Faenza, Urbino, and Cervia leagued against Rimini, Ravenna, and the Ghibelline Forlinpopoli, with Forli and Bertinoro: we have seen the cruel but able Ezzelino da Romano triumph over the Guelphs, under the Marquis of Este, and to his victory he now added the conquest of Padua. Frederick, therefore, reassured by the loyalty of Germany, once more crossed the Alps, and pitched his camp at Goïto, near Milan. Besides his German troops, he had a following of five hundred knights from Apulia, six thousand Saracens from Lucera, and the celebrated and formidable cavalry of Ezzelino, picked horsemen, trained to the highest perfection, from Verona, Padua, Pavia, Parma, Cremona, Reggio, Ferrara, and Modena.

Struck with terror, most of the Guelph communities professed submission; the Count of San Bonifazio, Giacomo da Caviara, and the Marquis of Este appeared at the Court of the Emperor; the entire country from Cremona to the Alps lay open to him. Bologna and Faenza were thus debarred from sending supplies to the Guelphs; and on Milan alone, that beam in the Imperial eye, devolved the entire burden of supporting the cause, and fanning

the sinking hopes of the Guelphs. Piacenza and Brescia were trusty and true, with a few unimportant dependencies; but from their position, commanded and surrounded by jealous and hostile neighbours, they could afford little effective aid.

Gregory IX., now at the extremest verge of human life, saw the danger of his Guelphic allies with a terror he attempted to conceal by calling to Frederick's attention the dangerous and distracted condition of the Christians in the East. His appeal was evaded, and on the 7th of October, 1237, the Emperor opened the war by the siege of Montechiari. It was bravely defended by twenty knights and fifteen hundred Brescian foot soldiers for twenty days, but it was taken and utterly destroyed. Undismayed by this check, the Guelphs gathered considerable reinforcements from Milan, Piacenza, Brescia, Alessandria, Como, Novara, and Vercelli; and Frederick having skilfully contrived to cross the Oglio, his enemies, after many perils, left Palazzuolo, waded through the torrent Serio, and advanced towards Nona. The infantry halted at Campo Longo, near Crema, and the Carroccio, with its guard, "dei Forté," and the baggage waggons, halted at Corte Nuova, about a mile behind. The Castles of Ghisalba and Cividale had been occupied by the Ghibelines of Bergamo; and these, commanding the position, lighted bonfires to acquaint Frederick with the presence of the Guelphs. Frederick had not sought the risk of a great battle, but when it presented itself, he did not decline it. By a forced march, he brought up his troops to Campo Longo, almost at the same time as the Guelphs reached it. The Imperial vanguard surprised the latter in all the disarray of their march. The heavily-armed horsemen and practised Saracens naturally bore back the unformed Guelph legions on Corte Nuova, but there the battle really began, and was disputed with dauntless courage. The Imperialists, under the Emperor, the first military leader of his age, pushed on with their war-cry, "Knights of the Emperor!" and "Knights of Rome." A gigantic elephant, bearing on his back a lofty tower,

from which floated the Imperial standard, and the banners and pennons of many of the nobler Ghibellines, occupied a commanding position in the army of the Emperor, whilst the red cross of the people towered from the Carroccio of the Milanese, as if in defiance to it.

The fight lasted throughout the day, in a continuous storm of violent rain ; but by nightfall the heroic valour of the Guelphs proved unavailing against numbers (for it is stated that Frederick had nearly one hundred thousand men with him), science, and superior discipline, and the victory remained with the Ghibellines. The Carroccio, which had been defended all day with much vigour and perseverance, could not be withdrawn from the field, from its unwieldy construction and the marshy nature of the soil. It fell into the hands of the enemy, was dismantled by them, and—bitter humiliation !—graced their triumphant entry into Cremona, with the massive cross dragging in the mire, and Tiepolo, the honoured Podestà of Milan, seated in front of it, with arms pinioned.

It is painful but instructive to add that most of the fugitives of the routed force were captured, and maltreated or destroyed, by the Bergamasques, through whose territory they were constrained to flee ; and thus the cruel oppression and ravages the Milanese did not scruple to wreak upon their less powerful neighbours, when opportunity offered, were visited on them in their hour of defeat.

The same considerations must excuse the ecstasies of joy displayed by Cremona, so long, so often, so cruelly, and so perseveringly ravaged and oppressed by Milan. Three hundred prisoners of noble birth graced the triumph of the Emperor. Cremona was adorned with flowers, hangings, and tapestries, to greet him ; the raptures of the inhabitants were, as we have seen, legitimised by the previous barbarities of the jealous Milanese ; and the cruel treatment of prisoners of war was also entirely in harmony with the customs of the age. It cannot be more severely blamed in this case than in any other, but the gratuitous and impolitic humiliation of Tiepolo,¹ a noble Venetian

¹ Petri de Vineæ. Epist., Lib. ii., cap. 35. Godefr. Colon., p. 371.

citizen—his being seen with the rope of infamy round his neck, and his being loaded with chains—was an act so stupid as well as mean, and so against the common customs of war, as to draw down the severest censure on the Emperor.

Many of the more important and therefore dangerous prisoners were sent on to Apulia, and in this the conqueror exercised undoubted rights; but when he afterwards transgressed these, and commanded the execution of Tiepolo (a Public Magistrate, and native of a friendly or neutral Republic of the importance of Venice) on the sea shore of the Southern Provinces, he committed one of those great errors against policy, as well as humanity, which, like his maltreatment of John of Brienne, was afterwards to be fully avenged against himself.

For the moment, however, Frederick was unquestionably triumphant; and, being on the most amicable terms with the Senator and people of Rome, he induced them to consent, against the remonstrances of Gregory (who had again been allowed to return to the city), to the exhibition of the remains of the ill-fated “Carroccio,” of Milan, which was pompously displayed, supported by five marble columns, in the Capitol.

Frederick, at this time, entered Lodi without opposition; and the position of Milan became critical in the extreme: the bridges over torrents and rivers were broken, provisions could not be obtained, or only in insufficient quantities; the enemies scoured the open country and intercepted communications with Brescia, Bologna, Alessandria, Piacenza, and Faenza. The winter storms and the havoc of war had laid the embankments low, and inundated the fields; nor was the city at union within. The horrible persecutions inflicted on the Paterini had at last aroused in these the fury of despair and of retaliation. The Paterini abhorred Frederick as their chief persecutor, with ample cause; but meanwhile they wreaked, at every opportunity, their revenge on the clergy, who were his willing instruments.

Whilst the city of Milan was in this distracted state,

Frederick was reorganising his army, to complete his triumph. We have before this called attention to the fact that the terms of feudal service effectually prevented the Emperors of Germany, whatever might be their military genius, from following up a victory; the feudal contingents were then chiefly solicitous to return home as expeditiously as possible, to place their booty in safety, and thus a breathing space was afforded to the defeated party by circumstances which the conqueror was powerless to control. Thus we find Frederick, whose array was stated to be of one hundred thousand men before Corte Nuova, was unable to press on and attack Milan, even in its discouraged and disorganized state. He was determined to besiege it in the spring; but meanwhile he was reduced to claim subsidies in money and reinforcements in men from all his friendly Ghibellines, both in Italy and in Germany. His success seemed so certain, however, that even Milan sued for peace, and offered very moderate and reasonable terms. She volunteered to recognise Frederick as Sovereign, and to submit her banners to his command, even to burn them to ashes, if he preferred it; and to send a contingent of ten thousand recruits with his army to the Holy Land. All these honourable promises were granted merely on the engagement that her liberties and privileges should be unaltered, and her past revolt be forgotten. Many other cities of the League proffered the same advantageous conditions; and Violante, the natural daughter of Frederick, with tears and prayers, implored her father to grant them, reminding him he could well afford to be merciful, "as he was wealthy in every human gift."

Frederick was inexorable, and insisted on unconditional submission and trust to his generosity. The cities refused, alleging in their address, "We know too well the meaning of thy pretended generosity to submit to this tyrannical order; and prefer to die by the sword, rather than by hunger, or by the rope and stake."¹

From Lodi, which he had entered with exultation, Frederick marched to Pavia, and there he received the

¹ De Cherrier, Vol. xi., p. 151.

oaths of allegiance of the terror-stricken population between the Ticino, the Alps, and Liguria, whom their defenceless state compelled to deny outwardly the League. He then returned to Verona to gather subsidies for fresh attacks on Milan.

Contingents poured in from Reggio, from Cremona, Bergamo, Pavia, and other Ghibelline cities ; and several hundred nobles of Brescia, attached to the party, contrived to join the Emperor, though at the peril of life and under the certain penalty of confiscation of property. Troops, likewise, reached him from Sicily and from England. The Counts of Provence and Toulouse, under the subjection of the Empire, through the sovereignty of the latter on Arles, sent him a body of excellent cavalry, commanded by the fiery prelate, the Bishop of Valence. To complete Frederick's confidence in speedy triumph, his own German contingents, well equipped and strong, came across the Alps to meet him at Verona. Along with these, the Archbishops of Cologne and Mayence conducted their youthful charge, Conrad, King of the Romans, whom his father hoped to initiate into the study of war, and to associate in his crowning triumph over Italy.

He could not foresee that the mysterious hour which apparently strikes in the destiny of the greatest of men, and which impresses us with the awe of a fatalism nothing human can escape, had struck for him also : that hour which marks the sudden and apparently inexplicable cessation of progressive fortune. Hitherto we have seen Frederick successful in mastering all the difficulties in his way ; both the obstacles raised by hatred, jealousy, and obstinate perversity, and those reared by his own grievous errors, which were, however, surmounted by his still greater genius. But from this date, 1238, nothing prospered with him, and henceforth we must narrate the decline of this greatest of the men of his day, and the most illustrious by far of his romantic and interesting house.

The considerations which the following pages will not fail to awaken must ever soften the lamentations that arise over genius and over glory when cut off in the crowning

moment of success. Who shall observe from what a series of reverses death saves those apparently ill-fated ones. Better, according to the almost uniform experience of mankind, to die in the moment of happiness, than to live a series of cloudy or stormy years, and finally to perish broken in heart and in frame, with sullied reputation and unavailing remorse, as have done so many great men, and as did Frederick of Hohenstauffen.

By the advice of Ezzelino of Romano, the campaign of 1238 began with the siege of Brescia, the Imperialists pitching their camp between the river Mello and the city, and destroying at the outset the rich and wealthy country around; and during two months all the exertions that the military science of the day could suggest, and all the cruelties that Frederick I. had practised at the siege of Crema, were renewed to conquer or terrify the city into submission.

But Brescia was well and ably defended by the skill of a Spanish engineer, a prisoner of war, compelled, by threats of torture and death, to act against his master, the Emperor.

The fury of warfare was irreconcilable in that day with any respect for the life of the conquered. Frederick caused the prisoners captured at Montechiaro to be brought up, and bound them to the military engines pushed up to batter the walls. The Brescians in reprisal tied their captives by long ropes, exactly on the spots the battering rams were designed to work.

The Brescians, undismayed by the overwhelming superiority of Frederick's forces, made frequent and sanguinary sorties; and at last, on a dark night, October 9th, 1238, they surprised the sleeping camp, and dealt such havoc that the Emperor was only saved by the coolness of the English foot soldiers, who rallied instinctively round his person, and whom nothing could break, thus giving time to the rest of the troops to rally and form, and oblige the Brescians to retreat, as day began to dawn.

The natural consequences of this check followed: the motley army, savage at its own culpable negligence in having been surprised, and unable to revenge itself upon

the Brescians, broke out into open murmurs at the fruitlessness of a lengthened siege. The storms of winter now impending made success impossible, and the campaign had thus to be brought to a precipitate and inglorious termination. The young King of the Romans and the German contingents, whose military term of service had expired, recrossed the Alps, and Frederick was left for the winter with his first decided military reverse, given to him by dauntless and apparently insignificant Brescia.

Another check met him at Genoa. We have seen how he had arrogantly reasserted the long-disused and formally-disavowed rights of direct dominion over the great northern cities; and, in pursuance of these, he sent an Imperial officer to Genoa, to receive the oaths of fealty of the inhabitants; but the Podestà was a Milanese, and his influence was so great that the claims of the Imperial envoy were positively refused; more, Genoa, hitherto maritime and almost neutral, joined, before the end of the year, the great Lombard League, and placed herself under the protection of "the Holy Peter and Paul." Moreover, under the pressure of a common danger, Gregory persuaded the rival maritime republics of Genoa and Venice to make peace with each other. When two rivals make peace, it is commonly at the cost of a third; in this instance the intended victim was to be Vatace, Greek Emperor of Constantinople, whose dominions, divided between the great commercial republics, offered an irresistible bait. The plea, however, for leaguings against him was that he did not "obey the spiritual authority of the Pope."

For ten years after this treaty, Genoa, who affected to consider Frederick as rebellious to the spiritual authority of the Pope as Vatace, in spite of his relentless persecution of the Paterini, formed part of the Lombard League, to the great injury of the Imperial cause.

Gregory, who had always hated Frederick, and who only waited for a favourable excuse to renew hostilities against him, now gladly seized a misunderstanding about

their several rights over the Island of Sardinia, to begin another violent attack on him. Sardinia, previously an African colony, had in the year 1017 been conquered by the united fleets of Genoa and Pisa; the territory remained to the latter, whilst the former carried off everything that was portable in the way of spoil.

The island was divided into four "Giudicati," Cagliari, Arborea, Torre, and Gallura, and the lands were distributed, according to the custom of the day, amongst a certain number of feudal families, with the feudal rights, and under feudal obligations. In the year 1163, one of these feudal lords, named Barisone of Arborea, desirous of evading the yoke of Pisa, offered homages and tribute of four thousand marks to Frederick Barbarossa, on condition of being acknowledged "superior" of the entire island. An offer of ready money, to be paid too in Genoa, under the guarantee of that wealthy and powerful city, was of course highly acceptable to a German Emperor with whom cash was ever the greatest want; and, in spite of the protests of Pisa, Barisone received the investiture of sovereignty of Sardinia, and was consecrated at Pavia. But unable to pay the expenses of this accession of dignity, it is instructive, as well as amusing, to hear he was thrown into a common debtors' prison, at that place, immediately after the ceremony, and suffered to remain there eight years. In the year 1165 the Emperor Frederick Barbarossa, who had cancelled the nomination of Barisone, in consequence of the energetic diplomacy of the Pisans, obtained an edict from the Diet of Frankfort, by which the Island of Sardinia was to be granted solely in fief to the Pisans.¹ This edict granted them not only the actual property of the allodial domains, but also the legal jurisdiction and all the former rights of Imperial suzerainty.

During the fierce contests that followed, some of the nobles sided with Genoa, some with Pisa, and a third

¹ "Concedimus in feudum tibi pro Comm. Pisan. recipienti plenam potestatem, jurisdictionem, et districtum et totum quod in Sardin. imperio pertinet." Flaminio dal Borgo *Diplomi Pisani*, xiii.

invoked the aid of Rome. As usual with that city, *apocryphal documents* were immediately forthcoming to establish her right to universal supremacy. Two of these were produced; one pretended to be a donation of Sicily made to the See of Rome by Constantine; another a grant made of the island to the Pope by Louis the Pious.¹ In the text of this document, the following territories and cities are also granted "to Pope Pascal I. and his successors, to serve for their enjoyment," as "they had done to that of their predecessors."

With and besides the name of Rome, part of Tuscany, Sardinia, Sabina, and even Sicily (which it is well known had never been under the rule of the son of Charlemagne) are alike to be found in this strange document.

The Carlovingians and early German sovereigns make no allusion to the titles of supremacy mentioned in this act, but in latter years, down to the lifetime of the Emperor Frederick II., we find the Papal authority unchallenged. At Hagenau, in 1219, Frederick II. had promised to aid the Pope, "as far as it lay in his power, in the defence of Sicily, Corsica, Sardinia, and in general of all the goods, territories, and prerogatives enjoyed by the Apostolic See."²

In the year 1218, two Pisan gentlemen, Ubaldo and Lamberto Visconti, armed several galleys, in order to attack those Sardinian nobles who were of Genoese extraction, and who adhered to the Roman party. War raged for eighteen years with varying success, but at his death, Lamberto left Ubaldo lord of Cagliari, and of various portions of the island. Lamberto had been included in the excommunication launched in 1229 by the Pope against Frederick II. and his adherents; but the anathema had not prevented his prospering, on the whole, in this world; and he had married Adelasia, heiress in her own right of Torre and of Gallura.

¹ This document, dated 817, seems probably to have been fabricated towards the latter end of the eleventh century.

² "Adjutores erimus ad retinendum et defendendum Ecc. Romanæ, Corsicam, Sardiniam, &c. jura quæ ad eam pertinere noscuntur." Pertz, T. iv., p. 232.

Another nobleman, Peter, held the Giudicato of Arborea, in virtue of his descent from Barisone, on whom a shadowy and momentary right had been conferred, as we have seen, by Barbarossa. Pietro naturally resisted to the utmost the claims of Ubaldo, and in 1237 a sort of treaty was negotiated between them, favourable, on the whole, to the Court of Rome. Adelasia had been persuaded to recognise, under a legal act, that the Giudicato of Gallura and Turritello belonged to the Holy See; and Ubaldo, making his peace with Rome, agreed to govern it as a "fief," and to pay tribute of four pounds of silver annually. By this agreement, if Adelasia should die childless, the districts of Torre and Gallura "were to return by right to the Pope."

With respect to the Giudicato of Arborea, Pietro was laid under a canon or tax of eleven hundred golden bezants or byzantines,¹ and forbidden to contract any new alliances for himself or others without the consent of the Sovereign Pontiff. On the death of Ubaldo, Adelasia married, in 1238, Enzo, a natural son of the Emperor Frederick II., though he was then but a lad of thirteen, who on this occasion received the honour of knighthood, and the style and dignity of King of Sardinia.

The troops of Frederick immediately seized on the principal places of Sardinia in the name of the youthful sovereign; and the Emperor published a manifesto to account for this wanton violation of the rights of Gregory, in which he says:—

"We have sworn at our consecration to reconquer all the provinces wrested from our predecessors, and we shall employ every effort in making this promise good. As it is incontrovertibly true that Sardinia is a dependency of our crown, we make use of a legitimate right in re-uniting this island to our Empire."²

The Pope, on the other hand, complained loudly and bitterly of the mode³ in which this usurpation had been

¹ Imperial Greek gold coins, each worth 13fr. 50c.

² Matthew Paris, p. 235.

³ *Jactura est gravis, sed modus jacturæ multo gravior et injuria videbatur.* Matthew Paris, p. 328.

effected, and called on the Emperor to desist all interference in an island he never had had a shadow of right to. Two envoys were sent from Rome to Cremona to negotiate the affair, and Frederick, in return, despatched the Archbishops of Palermo and Messina, the Count of Acerra, and Ruggiero di Porcastello, all personages of high rank, to represent him.

However, after a citation, which was not even noticed by Frederick, Gregory excommunicated him in the Lateran, on the 20th March, 1239, in terms breathing all the concentrated hatred of a foe, and all the wild fury of language so often seen in extreme age.¹

The sentence commences thus :—" In the name of the omnipotent God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, and in virtue of the authority of the Apostles Peter and Paul, we excommunicate and anathematize Frederick, Emperor, for the fomentation of sedition in Rome, and the attempt to drive the Sovereign Pontiff, and the cardinals, his brethren, from Rome ; for having trampled on the rights, the honour, and dignity of the sacred Apostolic See, and altogether violated the liberty of the Church and his own most sacred oaths."

Then follow the various counts of the indictment, the items of complaint : charges of extortion, cruelty, irreverence, irreligion, transgression of oaths, ungodliness, overbearing pride, and every most nefarious iniquity. The sentence winds up thus :—" For which causes we declare his (Frederick's) subjects to be liberated from their oaths of fealty to his person ; nay, we prohibit them from remaining faithful to him, whilst he is subjected to the weight of anathema. Moreover, in consequence of the manifold acts of oppression and injustice he imposes on all classes—the nobles, the poor, on widows and orphans, and generally on all the inhabitants of the Kingdom of Sicily, with regard to the government of which kingdom, Frederick had promised on oath to defer to the orders of the Church—we propose his *depo-*

¹ See the sentence at length. Matt. Paris, p. 329. *Annali Ecclesiastici*, 1239, s. xi.

sition, and we shall be at pains to effect it, with the help of God, and according to the rules of justice and right.¹ The said Frederick, whilst having been duly warned by us to correct himself, having shut his ears against our counsels, we shall henceforward consider him as bound under the ban of excommunication. The localities in which he sojourns are to be considered as *interdicted*, in spite of whatsoever anterior privileges they heretofore may have enjoyed: this under penalty of the deposition of all such priests as may infract the present decree. Ecclesiastics are prohibited from appearing in his presence, even when expressly called into it; those who are near him are warned to withdraw in all haste from his side. And thus, to obviate the necessity of punishment from negligence, we order the public repetition of this sentence to be read in church, with the accompaniment of lighted tapers, and all the solemnity of the tolling of bells. Finally, as the words and actions of the said Frederick make us doubt of his faith, to the point that nearly the whole universe accuses him of irreligion, we shall, with the grace of God, occupy ourselves with this important point, according to the legal forms used under similar circumstances.”²

This sentence was confirmed anew on the 24th March, Holy Thursday, of the year 1239, and Gregory commanded that the greatest publicity should be given to it, especially recommending it to the prelates, princes, and rectors of the Italian Republics. The sentence called forth no remark from the King of England, though brother-in-law to Frederick. The Pontifical bull was published in the church of St. Paul in London, and subsequently all over the realm.³ The Latin Emperor of Constantinople and the Kings of Scotland and Arragon in like manner accepted the bull: but the other sovereigns of Europe attempted a mediation between the furious old

¹ *Ipsium intendimus amovere, et in ipso negotio procedemus sicut justum fuerit procedendum.* Vita Greg. IX., p. 533.

² *Secundum quod in talibus requirit ordo juris.* Matt. Paris, Angl., p. 329.

³ Matthew Paris, p. 331.

Pope and the avowedly culpable Frederick. Gregory did not at the outset reap all the advantages he had hoped from his outburst of rage. The cause of this last excommunication seemed relatively too unimportant, to the eyes of men, to have called it forth, and, as a contemporary chronicler says, "The father of the faithful endeavoured to deter multitudes from their duty by persuading them they were bound to revolt against their sovereign, and depart from their oaths of allegiance." But the headstrong course of despotism Frederick had now obstinately bent his whole energies to carry out; his overt violation of all the sanctities and decorums of life and of his exalted station; the harsh and cruel temper which had superseded his once open and captivating demeanour; and the common belief (though the authorship has never been proved against him) that he wrote a singular and celebrated tract called "The Three Impostors," made his decline from this moment begin and seem amply deserved in the eyes of his countrymen.

The tract called "The Three Impostors," the real author of which is as unknown as that of a contemporary and equally celebrated work, the "Imitation of Jesus Christ," is as daring a denial of all the truths held sacred in Europe as any published during the age of Voltaire. It sets forth that mankind have, from the beginning, been deluded by three impostors, Moses, Jesus Christ, and Mahomet. How the work has survived the horror and the hatred of ages seems not the least surprising fact of its history. What was the class of minds which for ages perpetuated its existence by the laborious and dangerous process of copying by hand? Yet that this class of minds did exist, and that an obscure thread of scepticism has come down to us throughout all these centuries, is not to be doubted. The MS. copies found of this strange treatise in Spain, in France, and in Italy, in times when its possession was certain, if discovered, to lead to torture, to death, and to confiscation, prove it beyond all question.¹

¹ The writer of the present pages has seen one of these, a Spanish one, copied in the beautiful minute writing of the last century.

For the moment, however, the Emperor rejoined the Empress at Padua, where he kept a splendid Court, and indulged in the pleasures of the chase (his favourite recreation); affording to the natives the singular novelty of training leopards to find the game, according to the Oriental fashion.¹ These courtly pastimes did not check the intrigues of parties. The latter availed themselves of the temporary lull in the war to cement their respective adherents by the closest bonds. Azzo d'Este strove to attract the Guelphs entirely to his side, with the ulterior aim of founding some northern principality in his family; and Ezzelino da Romano, marking the policy of his rival, doomed his adherents to inevitable assassination; whilst Frederick, making no distinction of party, awarded to Guelph and Ghibelline the honours of his rank, and bestowed an equal share of courtesy and favour to both.

The Papal bull of 'excommunication' fell upon this brilliant Court like thunder in a serene sunny sky. But Frederick, with his usual happy policy, resolved to be the first to announce it to his immediate courtiers. The great bell of the city tolled a summons to all people to meet publicly, and Pier delle Vigne, taking for his text, according to the custom of the day, some Latin line or proverb, selected the two verses of Ovid:—

“Leniter ex merito quidquid patiare ferendum est,
Quæ venit indigne poena dolenda venit.”¹

The cause of Frederick was in good hands when advocated by this learned man and accomplished orator. He complained of the prejudices of the Pope against the Emperor, of the imprudence and precipitation he had shown in striking at a sovereign of such clement and benignant disposition, and one who had ruled the Empire with more justice and humanity than any other since the reign of Charlemagne; he ended by expressing his sur-

¹ Besides his great establishments of dogs and falcons, Frederick always kept trained panthers for the chase; these were kept blindfold on horseback by their Moorish attendants until the large game was descried. *Reg. Fred. II.*, p. 276.

² “Though merited punishment is to be suffered with patience, such as is unmerited excites our sorrow and wrath.”

prise at the vastness of the punishment in proportion to the offence.¹

The harangue was received with ominous silence; the nobles and upper classes seemed wavering; no spontaneous outburst of feeling in his favour gladdened the ear of the Emperor; and, as usual in the hour of defection, calumny was not wanting to hurry on the cause of treachery. Ezzelino da Romano, seeing his own advantage near at hand, poured forth to the irritated Emperor tales of fictitious conspiracies and intended desertions. All the rivals he hated were thus singled out as culprits, and were sent to the Southern Provinces, loaded with chains. Amongst these was the son of the great Marquis Azzo of Este, the peculiar rival and most detested foe of Ezzelino. In spite of this impolitic act of severity, Frederick was not unaware of the difficulties of his position, and despatched envoys to Rome, to attempt to soothe the exasperated Pontiff; but though one of these was the Bishop of Vercelli (the confidential friend of Gregory, and the same who had been charged by him to deliver pressing admonitions to Frederick before the excommunication), not the slightest effect was produced by their mediation.

Gregory was then almost one hundred years of age, and to his own unforgiving hatred of Frederick he added the mixture of passion and obstinacy so remarkable in extreme age; thus rendering himself exactly the instrument proper to carry out, not only the designs of the Churchmen who surrounded him, but the patriotic and politic determination of the Guelph party to crush at once and for ever the despotic rule which was avowedly threatened to be established over them.

Frederick burst into corresponding transports of wrath when he heard that in Rome, and in England more particularly, the sentence of excommunication against him had been repeated with all the solemnity of rite which imposed so deep an awe on the uncultured faculties of

¹ *Mirabatur quod illic, ubi nullum peccatum præcesserat pœna sic enormiter sit annexa.* Rolandinus, Lib. iv., cap. 10, p. 227.

the people, and when he heard of the Crusade preached against him in Germany, Milan, and the Guelph cities of Lombardy, his anger overflowed. "It is necessary to remind those in whose hands the government of the Church rests," he writes, "that it is to my exertions they are indebted for the restitution of the Holy Land. For that end I confronted perils and dangers of the deep, troubles by sea and land, for the glory of God. The Pope persecutes me through jealousy, and because he seeks rather to amass pelf than to diffuse the Catholic faith; the same who, under pretext of levying tithes, draws large sums to his coffers from the purse of Christendom,¹ wishes to deprive me of mine heritage. Let God, therefore, be the judge between me His soldier and the Pope His vicar. He knows that my present language is simply representative of the truth."

Frederick then addressed a series of circular letters to the other sovereigns of Europe, to the senator and people of Rome, to the cardinals, and especially to his brother-in-law, the King of England, reproaching them with their ready assent to the opprobrious and precipitate sentence the Pope had fulminated against him. He commanded Pier del le Vigne to compose another manifesto, exculpatory of his conduct, against the raving accusations of Rome.²

After the preliminary address, the manifesto proceeds: "Look around you, and open your ears, oh, sons of men! Weep ye for the scandals which afflict the world on the score of intestinal discord and departure from all righteousness and justice. Know ye that the perversity of Babylon is the work of the elders who are called upon to govern the people, in whose hands justice has turned to bitterness, the fruit of equity to gall. Princes! be on the alert! Peoples! pause in the consideration of your cause! May your eyes be opened to the light, and may your decision be inspired directly from the Lord!"

¹ "Pecuniam extorquens." Matt. Paris, p. 230.

² Matt. Paris. Petri de Vineia Epist. L. i., cap. 7. Whilst following the text, it must be kept in mind that rhapsodies and rhetoric were in accordance with the fashion of the day.

After enumerating the many causes of enmity he had against Gregory, whom he styles the "creator of schism and discord," Frederick finally refuses submission to the judgment of his most "implacable enemy;" refuses to recognise his right to call sovereigns to account; shows him in league with all rebels, and particularly with the city of Milan (that hot-bed of heresy and receptacle of every schism), and proceeds: "Let not the Christian populations nor the Church itself marvel if we refuse the verdict of such a judge. If we do so, it is neither in contempt of the power of the Holy See, nor of the Apostolic dignity to which those who live in the Catholic faith, and we, more than others, are submitted; but it is because we accuse the Pope of 'prevarication,' which has rendered him unworthy of his name and rank.¹ Let the princes of the Christian world recognise in us the zeal of a real attachment. Let them know that if the Sovereign of Rome is moved to wrath against the Roman Pontiff, he is not guided by a blind instinct, but swayed by real and legitimate motives; and, above all, because it is to be feared that the (Christian) fold confided to such a pastor, runs the risk of being dispersed into stray paths."

He then impugns with bitter skill the Pope's supposed motives. Whilst denying to have given any motive for legitimate grievances, he says:—

"Whilst examining our own conscience with the most scrupulous attention, we can find nothing to justify his transports of rage, unless it be in the fact of our having refused to unite a niece of the said Pope to our own natural son, Enzo, King of Torre and Gallura, which connection seemed ill-suited, nay, unworthy of us."²

Gregory retorted, in a brief too long for insertion, but

¹ "Sed personæ prevaricationem arguimus, quæ solio tanti regiminis se monstravit indignum." Matt. Paris, p. 341.

² "Nullam in nobis occasionem invenimus propter quam iste inimicus homo debuisset contra nos commoveri, nisi quod cum ipso contrahere de nepte sua desponsanda naturale filio nostro, nunc regi Turrium et Galluri, magnificentia nostra indecens credidit et reputavit indignum." Matt. Paris, p. 341.

which merits the most careful perusal. A few sentences will convey some idea of the unrestrained violence of the Pontifical pen. This curious brief,¹ addressed by Gregory, bishop, servant of the servants of God, to the bishops, potentates, and sovereigns of the world, commences thus:—"A furious beast has issued from the sea; its feet are those of a bear; its teeth resemble those of a lion; its members are like unto a leopard; nor does it open its throat save for the utterance of blasphemy against the name of the Lord, to throw insult on the Divine tabernacle and on the saintly company of heaven. It at one time laid secret snares against the Church; now it openly assaults it with its teeth and iron claws. He prepares engines for the Ishmaelites, builds schools for the perdition of souls, with the attempt to cancel, with the handle of heretical perversity, the tables of the Divine Testament. Cease to marvel, therefore, oh ye who are acquainted with the injurious language used against us by this furious beast. It is natural that we should become the mark of his calumnies, as God Himself is not exempted from similar outrages. But in order to refute with triumphant arguments such lies as he utters, it is only necessary to examine attentively the head, the body, and the extremities of this beast, who is the Emperor Frederick. Consider with how many artful arguments, sent forth in divers quarters of the Christian world, he endeavours to overcast our sincerity and throw a shadow on the Holy Church.

"Ere our own shoulders were borne down by the weight of the Apostolic charge, and again, after we had received it, we heaped our favours on Frederick, then hidden in sheep's clothing. In the same manner we continued to act so long as the natural hopes of a father on the score of a beloved son might be expected to last. These disappeared when this same Prince, blinded by his greatness, repaid evil for good to the Church, his holy Mother, after having long seduced her with insidious

¹ Lateran. 12 Kalend. Julii. Reg. Gregor IX., Lib. xiii., p. 150 et seq. Matt. Paris, p. 342 6.

words, and ultimately thrown poison, scorpion-like, on her with his envenomed sting."

A catalogue of the fiercest invectives, and a torrent of accusations of the utmost virulence and of comprehensive extent, follows, culminating in the iniquitous contempt Frederick expressed for the sentence of excommunication.

"He (Frederick) dares to maintain that he is in no way bound by the sentence which we the Vicar of Christ have pronounced against him. Now, he daring to affirm that Jesus Christ has not conferred on the Holy Peter and on his successors the power to tie and to loosen on earth, falls into the commission of heresy, endeavouring in this manner to wrench from the Church, the depository of all true faith, the privileges and authority it has received from the lips of God.

"But if there be any who are but slightly disposed to believe in his having revealed his real mind in uttering these assertions, we shall bring to convince them, to this effect, certain irrefragable truths. This Prince, seated on the chair of pestilence (*cattedra di pestilenza*) affirms the universe to have been deceived by Three Impostors; Jesus Christ, Moses, and Mahomet,¹ adding that the two latter died in refulgent glory, whilst Jesus was subjected to the ignominy of the cross. Nor does he comprehend how it is that the Son of God could be born of a Virgin, and refuses to lend faith to whatsoever is undemonstrated through the laws of nature and reason.² All these facts, and many more, with which he every day opposes the truths of Catholic faith, will, one day, in the fit time and place, be proved, as is just. We meantime render due notice of these facts to your serenity, inviting the accurate exposition of the subject, and items of this brief, in order that the purity of your intentions be not marred by the insinuations of fallacious words.

"Given at the Lateran, 1st July."

¹ "A tribus baratoribus, ut ejus verbis utamur, scilicet Christo Jesu, Moyse, et Mahometo totum mundum fuisse deceptum." Matt. Paris, p. 346.

² "Et homo debet nihil aliud credere, nisi quod potest vi et ratione naturali probare." Matt. Paris, 346.

Frederick did not suffer this brief to remain unanswered. He directed a circular letter to the prelates of the Empire exculpating himself from the reproach of heresy, and making an explicit profession of orthodox Catholic faith, breaking out afterwards in invective against Gregory, whom he terms allusively, "This father of discord, and not of mercy ;"¹ "of desolation, rather than of consolation ;" who "excites the whole world to scandal ; he is the anti-Christ in person of whom he calls us the 'Precursor.' He is the great dragon, the false prophet, the angel of darkness, who fills the whole earth and heavens with bitterness."

These epistles, in which both combatants write with a *naïveté* of virulence inexpressibly soothing to the old Adam, but strangely at variance with the precepts of Apostolic gentleness and courtesy, were followed by others in the same tenor ; and before the end of the year 1239 Gregory sought to improve his position by an appeal to the German Diet, inviting the great feudal barons forthwith to proceed to the deposition of Frederick, and to the election of another sovereign.

We have seen that the ostensible cause of the present deadly quarrel between the Pope and the Emperor had been the enforcing of the Imperial pretensions to the island of Sardinia. These pretensions, for any evidence we have, were quite as visionary as Gregory's apocryphal grants of that island to Rome ; but such as they were, it will be remembered, they had been accepted and ratified ; or, as we may now say, the usurpation of Sardinia had been eagerly accepted by Imperial Diets ; consequently, to demand of the great feudal lords "the deposition" of their sovereign for acting on pretensions they themselves had sanctioned was an act of premature and overbearing passion in the Pope ; and it is no disparagement to the justice of his grievances against Frederick if it proved a failure.

The great German electors consequently refused, as one man, to comply with the Pope's desire, alleging that

¹ Petri de Vineæ Epist., Lib. i., n. 3, T. i., p. 197.

“though they admitted the right of the Pontiff to invest the Emperor with the insignia of his dignity *was indisputable*, they did not allow him that of *despoiling him of the same authority when it had been once rightfully bestowed.*”

This bold and politic answer, evading all judgment on the private items of dispute between the Tiara and the Crown, and placing the question on a far broader and more independent basis, was a deep disappointment to Gregory, who, with the irascibility of excessive age, and a mind enervated by the incessant gross adulation that forms the daily and hourly food of a very aged man, isolated from his fellow creatures, and deluding himself into the belief that he is not the mere Servant and Instrument of the Divine Will on earth, but absolutely the “Divinity” himself, thought that he had but to order the fall of Frederick in order that the latter should cease to reign.

The errors and crimes of the Emperor were destined, however, to afford a far more impressive and instructive lesson in the chastisement they brought upon him, and by the stains they will cast, to all time, on his great and versatile genius.

So far from being awed by the Papal Crusade against him in his own Empire, Frederick retaliated by every means in his power, treating the advocates of rebellion exactly with the same severity, whether lay or ecclesiastic. He hanged and otherwise slew many of the wandering monks, the emissaries of Rome, and jestingly reminding the wealthier prelates and priests who intrigued against him that a man cannot serve two masters, expelled many of them from their rich domains, sent them to their real master, and appropriated their revenues and great estates. Had these measures been taken solely against foreign priests, it is not likely, from the feeling of jealousy that existed in Germany against the latter, they would have been very severely condemned; but, as always happens when a harsh order emanates from a hard monarch, too far distant to exercise a vigilant control over its execution, party passions, private revenge, avarice,

and old family feuds were gratified by the agents of the Emperor, under the pretence of checking rebellion; and murmurs of dissatisfaction soon arose even amongst the adherents of the Imperial rights.

Frederick entered the impending struggle with the infatuation and recklessness of a man predestined to ruin. Not content with his violent and arbitrary claims over Upper Italy, he openly avowed his determination to follow the example of his wicked and cruel father Henry VI., rather than curb his wild frenzy for the utter subjugation of Italy. The Bishop of Messina, a prudent counsellor and able adviser, strove in vain to arrest him in the outset of this desperate course, and to bring about a reconciliation with Rome, but Frederick answered he was so exasperated by the persecutions of the Pope, that he meant to annex the Duchy of Spoleto and the Marches of Ancona, with the other lands which, at divers times, depended on these, to the mass of his domains.¹ This firm intention of an aggression for which there was not the faintest pretext, and which naturally aroused against him every violent and bitter feeling of hostility in the heart of an alien population, was the more inexcusable in its folly that it alarmed still more, for their very existence, the Guelph cities of Upper Italy, who would have thus had their powerful foe on their rear, could he have accomplished his design and alienated the rising republic of Venice, to whom his neighbourhood augured no good, though there was far from being any ill-will as yet between Frederick and the Venetians, the latter deriving incalculable wealth from the commerce of the Empire conducted on fixed laws, as we have seen in the reign of Barbarossa, and since that day infinitely developed.

But Frederick in his calmer moments was as happy and as skilful an administrator of territory, as he was reckless and savage when thwarted; and the *Salt Pits*

¹ "Disposuimus firmiter irrevocabili proposito nostro Ducatum et Marchiam et terras alias quæ longo tempore Imperio subductæ fuerunt et subtractæ ad manus nostras et Imper. revocare." Reg. Frid. ii., p. 253.

of the territory he coveted (the homely but immense source of prosperity to Venice, and by them defended with every outlay of treasure and blood) had not escaped his vigilant eye. Having thus wantonly provoked the antagonism and suspicion of all Italy, and having as we have so repeatedly shown, only the uncertain and brief resources of feudal service to rely upon, besides his Saracens and the Ghibelline adherents of his party, the fate of Frederick could not be doubtful.

The Court of Rome, in addition to the solemn assumption of a superhuman and divine mission, naturally rose as the head, the protector, and the leader of a nation combating a foreign foe. If the nation fell, it knew its miserable and hopeless destiny; and no defeat could bring worse evils than those of Frederick's avowed despotism, whilst, by a bold and united front, the latter might be worried into defeat, as before Brescia, and thus destroyed in detail.

Yet was not the battle without peril to Gregory, even with the powerful moral and religious enthusiasm he had successfully invoked.

The rule of *party*, ever the curse of Italy, had nourished all the former hatred, fomented by oppression and ruin, assassination and outrage, between the Guelph and Ghibelline factions. The latter conceived their hour of revenge was nigh. Within Rome itself the haughtier and more generous spirits were in perpetual rebellion against the vile abuses and abject corruption of the ecclesiastic rule, when unchecked by fear and by public opinion.

The aristocracy of Rome and their followers professed allegiance to the Emperor, and ostentatiously renewed every year oaths of allegiance, which virtually rendered them as nearly independent of all control whatsoever as possible.

From some unexplained cause, Viterbo, usually the very stronghold of Papal power, opened her gates to Frederick; so did Sutri, Cittadi, Castello and Corneto and Monte Fiascone. At this juncture consternation and

fear seized the Roman community. Gregory partook of it to the last degree of panic. He ordered the relics most venerated by the Romans to be publicly exposed; he preached the Crusade anew against his enemy, and, now on the latest verge of existence, solemnly blessed the great multitudes gathered in Rome, who were moved to the wildest enthusiasm by the affecting appeal.

The details of the succeeding war must perforce be omitted. The object we have chiefly in view is to commemorate the heroism of the Lombard Guelph cities in the defence of their liberties. The siege of Faenza lasted seven months; the city fell April 5, 1241, merely through the last extremities of famine. The Emperor had also conquered Romagna, the Marches of Ancona, and Benevento, and, intoxicated with triumph, he was about to lay siege to Bologna.

Gregory, increasingly alarmed, summoned the Œcumenical Council for March 31, 1241, and, under the pretext of the passage of the prelates who must attend it, sought to gain time by a year's truce, which the Bishop of Brescia was ordered to demand of Frederick. The latter refused. The decision may now be safely condemned, for, however false might be Gregory's motives, his extreme age rendered his surviving for a year improbable, and a more politic enemy would have rather seized the offer of the truce, to improve his position, to conciliate his opponents, and to show to the world he fought for safety and honour, and not against the Pope's undoubted religious prerogatives.

Blinded by passion and by his recent superficial successes, Frederick not only refused the truce, but forbade, under penalty of treason, the attendance of his German subjects, lay or ecclesiastic, at Rome.

It is amusing to note the careful clause in this edict which provides not only for the arrest of such prelates as may be found out already on their way to Rome, but for the seizure of their "horses, baggage, and sumpter beasts." Amadeus, Count of Savoy (created Duke of Sciably and Aosta by the Emperor in 1238), was named

Imperial Vicar, and entrusted with the charge of keeping the Alpine passes, and of "arresting ecclesiastics" that might seek to cross the Alps. He refused safe conduct to French and English prelates who might wish to pass through Italy, and took every means to declare that the pretended council was but a fresh stratagem of Gregory to move fresh treasons and intrigues against him, by tampering with the interests and consciences of the clergy of Europe.

To defeat these tyrannical edicts of Frederick, the Pope chartered galleys from the Genoese, by the able negotiation of Gregorio "di Romania." These ships were engaged to embark the prelates who had gathered at Nice, and to conduct them to the mouth of the Tiber; they were also to reconduct them back after the council was dismissed.

This negotiation, and the gathering of the great primates of France and England and their trains, besides innumerable other prelates of high rank, at Nice and Genoa could not long be concealed from so vigilant an enemy as Frederick; he was also then in high spirits, as the great Cardinal Giovanni Colonna (offended at some slight, real or fancied, shown him at the Vatican) joined the Imperial cause with all his mighty following. Frederick had ordered a fleet of twenty-seven galleys, commanded by Anselmo da Mari (having also the young Enzo on board) to cruise in the Italian waters, for the purpose of intercepting the Genoese fleet.

The war subsisting between Genoa and the League and Frederick made a naval action fall perfectly within the rules of all warfare; but to secure himself against what he hoped would be the issue of this sea-fight, he sent to the prelates offering them "safe conducts to Rome, if they would first of all visit his Court, and hear, from his own lips, his provocations and reasons for being at war with Rome."

The prelates unanimously declined to confer with an excommunicated man, whom they mistrusted in every way. But they found themselves thus between two

perils : the message of the Emperor proved that he was aware of their presence in Italy, and again, although they were but inexperienced Churchmen, they expressed reasonable doubts of their safety with so slender an escort as the vessels prepared for their embarkation within the Genoese port.

On this the bold Genoese (to whom fear was unknown and triumph was habitual) burst into a torrent of ridicule at the "*timorous ecclesiastics*" and cowardly *letterati*, and gallantly defied any foe, confident in the strength of their ships and their own seaworthiness. On the 25th April, 1241, the Prelates were at last, with deep forebodings of evil, persuaded to embark. But a new foe was then cruising in their watery way. The Ghibelline Pisans had all along attempted to persuade the Genoese from opposing overtly the Emperor; and failing in that endeavour, now manfully sent forty-five galleys to sea, to meet their old foes on their own element. These forty-five galleys, under Count Ugolino Buzzacherini, joined the twenty-seven of the Sicilian admiral, and, under the nominal guidance of Enzio, cruised between Italy and Corsica.

Instead of waiting for reinforcements on their way from Porto Venere, or of deferring their voyage until better information had reached, the Genoese, as if predestined, set sail, steering for Civita Vecchia. On the 3rd of May they fell in with the combined fleets of Sicily and Pisa, between the rocky islets of Giglio and Monte Christo. At the very outset, three Genoese galleys were sunk, and every soul on board was lost; no human bravery, skill, or devotion could stand against odds so overwhelming, skill not inferior, bravery as great, and the glow of a certain triumph firing every eye.

It is painful to write the tragic issue of this celebrated naval fight. Twenty-two of the fine Genoese war galleys were captured, and the vessels of merchandise and property of the prelates were almost all captured also. Four thousand prisoners were taken; two thousand gallant Genoese seamen, the flower of the republican

naval armament, perished ! The first dignitaries of the Church were amongst the captives : the Legates of France and England, the Cardinals " Di Preneste " and " Di San Niccola," the Pontifical Legate, Gregory " di Romania," the Archbishops of Bordeaux and Rouen, and others ; they numbered one hundred of the highest foreign prelates.

Only five galleys escaped to carry the disastrous tidings to Genoa. No defeat had ever approached this one ; and yet it was a defeat without shame, for the odds were too enormous (all other circumstances being equal) against Genoa, encumbered as her galleys were by the troublesome convoy of the merchant ships, and crowded, as they were, by helpless and despairing landsmen.

The naval fight was, as we have seen, fully within the legitimate laws of war ; but the remorseless cruelty and outrages heaped on the captives have come down to us, authenticated beyond all doubt, as inflicted by the express command of the Emperor.

They were first of all stripped of all their possessions, and crowded into the felons' dungeon at Pisa, and were then transferred to the " Castel dell' Uovo," at Naples, where a pestilential disorder speedily broke out, and closed by death the sufferings of many of them.

Gregory, stricken with dismay and anguish, addressed the deepest and most paternal consolations by epistles to the prisoners ; but the French clergy addressed a severe and dignified remonstrance to the Emperor, and the just and saintly Louis IX. demanded, in firm and categorical terms, the release of the French captives. He wrote to Frederick, " Our ancestors and yours have lived in harmony together. We had denied the succour and help demanded by the Bishop of " Preneste " and other Pontifical legates which they required in the Pope's name in order to attack you. You must, however, be cautious if you imagine France to be so poor in warriors, and in strength, as to allow herself to be pricked with impunity by your spurs."¹

¹ " Quod se permittat vestris calcaribus perurgeri." Petri de Vineâ Epist., Lib. i., n. 12, p. 115. Script. rer. France, T. xx., p. 332.

Frederick answered by asserting his right to use every means of defence against implacable foes who had sworn his utter ruin and extermination. He thanked Heaven for the "discomfiture of the Pope and his allies," and showed no symptoms of regret or remorse.

The Genoese, undismayed by the defeat of Monte Christo (a defeat, indeed, owing, as far as human pride could allow, solely to the unexpected appearance of the Pisan fleet), offered fresh and stronger aid to the Pope; but the victorious fleet of forty galleys of Frederick rode the seas, and the Ghibelline population of Pavia and Tortona, under the Imperial vicar, Uberto Pallavicini, devastated the land territories from whence Genoa derived her subsistence.

The sudden and alarming inroads of the Tartars, who rushed into Hungary, and who even menaced Germany, proved a happy relief to the cares of the Guelphs and the anguish of the Pope.

These unexpected foes compelled the warlike resources of the Empire, for the first time since the Battle of Bovines, to be employed in the defence of Germany itself. Frederick had to provide for six separate armies, or if we admit that term to be exaggerated, at least six considerable bodies of armed foot and horse, all avowedly under the Imperial banner. The first of these he led himself in Romagna; the second was employed in keeping the Genoese in check; Ezzelino "di Romano" kept the Trevigiano and the Marches of Verona with the third; a fourth invaded the Duchy of Spoleto and Tuscany; a fifth had been despatched to the Holy Land (anew plunged into troubles and bloodshed); and the sixth, or principal, was retained in Germany, to oppose the Tartars, then the terror of Western Europe.

Frederick carried his war of devastation to the walls of Rome; he burnt down the village of Borgoforte, and razed the magnificent castle raised at enormous cost by the Pope's nephews, and called Monteforte. Overcome with years and humiliations, Gregory IX. expired, 21st of August, 1241.

We have seen the strange errors of policy which this great and able Pontiff committed against Frederick II., but they were the errors of mere old age and the weakness of a decaying mind surrounded by adulation; they do not detract from the lofty and splendid career he had passed through during the years his faculties enjoyed freedom and vigour. Throughout Europe he was generally revered and loved. The punishment of Gregory, as that of Hildebrand, fell exactly on the point upon which he was most open to censure—his boundless arrogance and abuse of his ecclesiastical privileges. Like Hildebrand, he expired in the sorrows of a broken heart, witnessing the fruitlessness of his wild raving, and his sweeping denunciations. But, like Hildebrand and Innocent III., he had laid down a line of policy to be continued by his successors, and which, aided by the wickedness and follies of the Hohenstauffens, finally accomplished their extinction; though at the cost of forsaking what had hitherto been the patriotic glory of Rome, the policy which proclaimed the expulsion of the foreigners' yoke to be the first Italian duty.

The death of his implacable foe, Gregory IX., did not materially affect the position of Frederick, who was well aware that the entire body of cardinals were equally hostile to him; but their next choice fell upon an aged and feeble prelate, Godfrey of Castiglione, elected in the last days of October under the name of Celestin IV. He died within a month; and the cardinals, to avoid being shut up a second time in conclave, absented themselves from Rome.

Frederick, who had every reason to desire an interregnum, spared no pains to prevent a conclave meeting, and the year passed without any successor to Celestin IV. being named. So precipitate had been the retreat of the Sacred College, indeed, that it had dispersed before the remains of the latter Pontiff were laid in the grave.

The French clergy threatened to select a Pope for themselves, so injurious was this delay to the interests of the Church. In England public prayers were offered

for the safety and protection of the latter, and the English prelates supplicated Frederick fervently not to interfere with the free passage of the cardinals to Rome.

Frederick answered that the fault, if fault there were, did not rest with him, "but with the Church of Rome, whose greed and pride were the bane of Christendom. "But even," he adds, "if we had merited some reproach for our conduct, who can blame us, after all we have suffered at her hands?"¹

Somewhat modified in tactics by these ardent appeals, however, he wrote a missive to the cardinals,² whom he addressed as "sons of Belial," "elements of perdition," "culpable of every human disaster." "You," he says, "who ought to be the central force and support of the Holy See, you, by your dissensions, render yourselves the bane of the peoples; inasmuch as each one of you aspires to the papacy, and none of you can resolve to give his vote to another." (*Dum quilibet vestrum adspirat ad cathedram unus non consentit in alium et nullus erigitur.*)

After many further delays, the cardinals agreed to meet at Anagni; and Frederick, having released those who were his prisoners, withdrew his troops into Apulia, that he might not be accused of overawing their deliberations. On the 25th of June, 1243, their choice fell upon a Genoese of noble birth and of the Ghibelline party, Sinibaldo de' Fieschi, who was proclaimed Pope under the title of Innocent IV.

Frederick was congratulated on this apparently favourable election; but he replied, with the wisdom of one well versed in party warfare, "Cardinal de Fieschi was my friend, but Innocent IV. will be my foe, as no pontiff can remain a Ghibelline."³

Whilst thus expressing his prophetic opinions to his

¹ Matthew Paris, p. 391.

² Petrus de Vineis, Lib. i., n. 14, pp. 118-120.

³ *Perdidi bonum amicum, quia nullus Papa potest esse Ghibellinus.* Galvani Flammæ. Manip. Flor., cap. 276, p. 680.

confidants, he used widely different language to the new Pontiff and to the world at large. He addressed a most submissive letter, full of protestations of obedience and regard, to Innocent :—

“ We have learnt with extreme satisfaction,” he says, “ that our old friend has become our father. We consider that your elevation to the Pontificate will put an end to discord. In this firm persuasion, we, for our part, promise to employ all our strength, and to make every effort, in the maintenance of the dignity of the Roman Church, and the protection of ecclesiastical liberty; and, save in the maintenance of our special rights and the honour of the Crown, we promise to show ourselves an obedient son to yourself, and to be submissive and full of affectionate regard.”

Te Deums were chanted in all the churches of the Empire, to celebrate the election of the new Pope, and an apparent interval of harmony reigned over the Christian world.

Imperial ambassadors were sent to treat with the Pope, and after some evasions, for form's sake, on the ground of the anathema out against Frederick, Innocent absolved the deputation, and negotiations for peace were entered upon.

No serious difficulties were made on either side until the question of the independence of the Guelph party was brought forward.

Frederick insisted on the submission of the cities of Lombardy; the Pope as determinedly refused, and sent messengers to them desiring them to stand to their arms; and a symptom of the falling fortunes of Frederick was soon seen in the return of the important city of Viterbo to its natural allegiance. Alarmed on hearing it had suddenly risen in favour of the Pope, he hurried thither in person, but only arrived in time to see his soldiers beaten and ill-used, and thrust without the gates by the adherents of Rome. Lodi, Assisi, Radicofani and Perugia immediately followed the example of Viterbo. Innocent IV. spared neither treasure nor promises, and

added to his party the powerful Marquises of Montferrato and Malaspina di Ceretto, who, in their turn, detached numerous other lesser nobles from the Ghibellines.

From Rome also was sent another army of monks to Germany, to undermine the allegiance of the people; and the open profligacy of the life of Frederick afforded but too just a theme for reprobation. The severest measures of repression were, however, unhesitatingly used against these "firebrands," as the Emperor termed them, and, both in Germany and in Sicily, hundreds perished by the rope or in tortures.¹ His own presence in Germany was greatly needed to renew his popularity; but the state of Italy demanded still more imperatively his personal attention, for the desolation of famine was now added to the other evils. The fertile fields of Italy had been devastated, and incessant torrents of rain falling had made it impossible to sow them afresh. Plague, as usual, followed famine; the wretched population of Lombardy, compelled to support life on the coarse roots and herbs commonly given to cattle, fell an unresisting prey to the plague called "black death." Milan, the stronghold of the Guelphs, was visited in the severest manner: cart-load after cart-load of the dead was flung into a trench outside the walls of the city; no distinction was made between rank or sex; no Christian burial could be administered.² Frightful earthquakes rent the soil in Lucca and in some parts of Tuscany, prostrating many beautiful and revered fabrics to the ground. Both the contending factions threw the blame of these judgments of Heaven on the other; but the Pope certainly increased the exasperation of public feeling by sending for the emissaries, not to relieve the unfortunate people in their distresses, but to levy from them great sums of money, under the pretext of "religion." Every one professed to sigh for peace, but the evil passions and rancour of every heart prevented those mutual concessions which only could have ensured it.

¹ Matthew Paris, 1243, p. 414.

² Galvan. Flammea. Cap. cclxxvi, p. 68. This has been found to be literally true, and was repeated during the cholera in our own times.

Whilst treaties for peace were being nominally carried on, the state of the city of Rome had become so ungovernable as to afford a fair pretext for Innocent to withdraw from it. He had been received with open arms, during the siege of Viterbo, but he presently found his life embittered by the importunities of the creditors of his predecessor.

Gregory had borrowed from Roman merchants a sum of 40,000 marks (220,000 francs) as a subsidy for the Guelphs of Lombardy, and his creditors fomented dissension. Not only did they claim their lawful right from Innocent IV., but they encouraged the mob to clamour for an "indemnity," under the excuse that the prolonged absences of Gregory from the capital had exposed them to want and many evils,¹ and the Imperial agents, who had obtained from the powerful Frangipani a part of their fortified mansions in and near the Coliseum, artfully fomented popular clamour by spreading abroad the amount of the enormous sums levied by the Papal emissaries throughout the world.

The conditions of peace had been agreed to ; Frederick had consented to restore all the domains he had conquered from the Church, and to release all prisoners, when the Pope suddenly brought forth a new stipulation—that Frederick should fulfil his part of the contract before he was relieved from anathema. Frederick, so far from conceding this point, not only demanded the immediate removal of the late Pope's anathema, but appealed to all the Christian princes of Europe, as umpires in his cause. Neither party choosing to yield, Innocent not unwillingly availed himself of the excuse given by the turbulent state of Rome, now almost in open revolt, to defer the settlement of the question to some further period, and having previously created twelve new cardinals, he privately quitted Rome for Civita Castellana, on the 7th of June, 1244. Before this creation, the number of cardinals had been diminished to seven, and by the new creation, three bishops, three ecclesiastics, and six deacons were

¹ Curbio, s. 7.

raised to the dignity, thus affording Innocent a perfectly sure support.

Ere he left Rome, he had decided on a plan, the boldest, most subtle, and effectual, to checkmate his great adversary. He had determined to depose him from his Empire by the solemn decree of the General Council of the Church; the only difficulty was to decide in what city this great ceremony could be held. Italy was out of the question; the military power of Frederick, in spite of checks and defections, was still overwhelming; Germany was equally beyond Papal power. He determined, therefore, to appeal to the youthful and saintly King of France for hospitality and countenance.

He first of all left Civita Castellana, on some pretext, for Sutri, and from thence, in disguise, escorted by several cardinals, he pushed on to Civita Vecchia, by lonely, unfrequented, and dangerous bridle paths. A ship was awaiting him at the latter port, and on the 29th of June, 1244, he embarked for his native Genoa, where he was received with ecstasies of joy and triumph, and soon received the enthusiastic greetings and acclamations of the Guelph deputies of the Lombard cities.

The agents of Innocent to the Court of France found King Louis present at an assembly of a Chapter that was being held at the very moment they arrived. The Chapter, on bended knees, offered supplication to the monarch, to grant the appeal of the Pope; but the King was as wise a monarch as he was humble as a Christian. He knelt down also, in all humility, before the Legates and the Chapter, but he declined their request, alleging it was too serious a matter to decide without consulting "the great Barons of the realm."

The nobles of France of course peremptorily refused to allow the kingdom to be convulsed by ecclesiastic intrigues, and by the Pope's private and utterly gratuitous hatred of the Emperor, who, however he might have offended his predecessor, had given him no cause of enmity. The Courts of Arragon and England¹ returned

¹ Matt. Paris, p. 443.

a like answer, and meeting everywhere with obstacles, the Pope finally selected Lyons, a free city of the Empire, for his residence. This city, nominally under the supremacy of an archbishop, was governed under communal jurisdiction, and was an independent state, free from imposts, governed by its own freely-elected magistrates, and the administration of justice and the command of the militia were equally in its own hands.¹

The Pope was detained for three months at Genoa by a severe illness, brought on by the fatigues and hardships he had undergone; but he then set out, carefully guarded by the friendly Guelphs, through the territories of the Marquises Del Caretto and Montferrato. Asti and Alessandria showed some hostility, but were speedily conciliated, and even rallied to his cause. At Susa he rested for a few days, and was joined by the cardinals who had accompanied him from Sutri. The Duke of Savoy, the liegeman of the Emperor, granted a safe conduct to the head of the Church, and he finally reached Lyons December 1st, 1244, meeting with a respectable if not enthusiastic reception.

The free burghers of that city soon found they had incurred a very costly honour in the presence of the Pope. They were expected to maintain him and all his Court at their own expense; and the canons of the cathedral complained that several nominations to vacant prebends were filled up by the Pontiff in favour of his own followers, and without any consideration for their claims. The characteristic comment of the affronted canons cannot be omitted: "That should the intruders be tempted to fill their offices, the people could not be prevented, if they chose, from pitching them into the Rhône."

Innocent, whose interest it was to remain in his good quarters, refrained from any resentment of these and many other murmurs of discontent and petty insults. Innocent, as we have seen, was a man of a powerful and able cast of mind. He had been early a deacon, and had

¹ Augustin Thierry, *France Municipale*; *Histoire du Tiers Etat*. p. 280.

been promoted to the office of Vice-Chancellor at Rome. He was deep in the confidence of Honorius III. and of Gregory IX.; he had been a friend and almost a favourite of Frederick, consequently he was well acquainted with every most effectual device to destroy him; he had already convoked the Roman Catholic world by encyclical letters,¹ to discuss amply the affairs of Europe, and of the Church, which were at that time in a deplorable condition.

Throughout Europe it was well understood that the real object of this Council was the ruin of the great Emperor; and the clergy throughout all lands had orders to repeat anew the sentence of excommunication. A French curate, puzzled in his conscience, pronounced the following pithy discourse on ascending his pulpit:—

“Brethren, I have been commanded to excommunicate the Emperor Frederick; but though I am acquainted with the existence of an implacable hatred between the latter and the Pope, I am truly ignorant of the cause of the same. Certes, however, one of the two must be in fault! But which is it of the two? God only knows. In this case, however, as far as I am concerned, I excommunicate the culprit, and I absolve the victim of an injustice which acts prejudicially on the whole of Christianity.”² This speech made a great noise, and the curate was severely punished by the Pope.

The reasons alleged by the latter for convoking this General Council were, “To spare the Holy Land from the attacks of the Karismeni, and to avert its complete ruin; to drive away the Tartars, and other persecutors of the Faith; to succour Constantinople, and to settle the disputes between the Holy See and Prince Frederick.”

No direct intimation was given to the Emperor of the convocation of this Council, under the pretext that his perverse machinations rendered all direct intercourse with him impossible.

¹ Laporte du Theil. *Lettres des Papes*, L. xix. *Annales Eccles.*, 1245.

² Matthew Paris, 1245, p. 442. Sainte Foix says this spirited curate was of St. Germain l'Auxerrois.

“We, in a public sermon,” said Innocent IV., “have intimated to the said Prince to appear before the Council¹ in order to answer to the accusations which shall be brought against him, and for the satisfaction of the Church.”

Frederick had been wholly unprepared for the daring flight of Innocent, and for his selecting a sojourn so entirely beyond his reach. To counteract the efforts of the Pope, so far as in him lay, he convoked a diet at Verona in September, 1244. The Emperor of Constantinople attended it, and most of the princes and dignitaries of the Empire. After many weeks of discussion, several Imperial representatives were chosen, amongst whom were Taddeo di Sessa, Walter d'Ocre, and other able jurists, to plead the cause of Frederick in presence of the future Council. Intimation of this was sent to the cardinals, who were also informed of his full readiness to appear in person before the Council, if desired.

This intimation increased the alarm of the Pope; he had received anonymous letters, stating that Frederick sought to revive the audacious project of his grandfather Barbarossa half a century before, of making himself Lord Paramount of Rome, and thus reducing the Pope to a secondary personage. This belief was the secret spring of the irreconcilable enmity of Rome; the Œcumenical Council was hurried on, but the prelates who joined it were fewer in number than was anticipated.

The Patriarchs of Constantinople, Antioch and Aquileia came, one hundred and forty metropolitan bishops,² and many prelates of less rank.

The Spanish clergy were most numerous; then the French and English; few Germans attended. One bishop was enabled to come from the Holy Land, and some Italians, expelled from their dioceses by the Emperor, who now added to his enemies by devastating the private property of the Fieschi near Parma, and in the Terra di

¹ “Sciturus quod nos dictum principem in prædicatione nostra citavimus,” &c. 3 Januarii, 1245, Reg. Inn. IV., Lib. v., f. 205. *Annal. Eccl.*, 1245.

² *Concil. Labæi et G. Cossantii*, T. xi., p. 638.

Lavoro, came to lay their just grievances before the assembly of their brethren.

A troop of men-at-arms, in the pay of the Templars and Hospitallers, guarded the Council. These were commanded by a man of the most public infamy of character, Philip of Savoy, brother to the Duke of the same name ; and the choice of this captain reflected no honour on Innocent IV. ; but public indignation increased when on this reprobate ruffian, who was a layman, the revenues and titles of " Archbishop of Lyons," " Bishop of Valenza," and " Provost of Bruges " were cumulated.¹

Besides this latter outrage to public opinion, the extravagant exactions of the Pontifical Court threatened the ruin of Lyons ; and the Archbishop Ayhner, unwilling to countenance scenes of profligacy and extortion which he could not avert, resigned his supreme dignity, and retired with resignation and fortitude into a convent. Thus was the way opened for that great and shameless scandal, than which none of the Ecclesiastical Offences charged against Frederick could be more heinous. During twenty-two years, and under four different Popes, this savage and profligate scoundrel was allowed to enjoy the vast revenues and titular possession of the honours and dignities so culpably and scandalously bestowed on him, and which exposed the name of the Church to the deepest reproach. At last Clement IV. compelled him to resign ; he then became the husband of Alice, heiress of Franche Comte, and ultimately Count of Savoy.

We have dwelt upon this public and notorious act of the Papacy to show the real cause of the long fluctuating of the war between the Guelphs and the Ghibellines. In spite of the natural effects of a papal anathema in intimidating weak minds, the unscrupulous violation of all morality by the Roman Government, when it suited its own interest, was its greatest foe ; it showed too plainly how little it relied, in truth and faith, on the holy maxims and doctrines it preached to the laity, or used as engines of defence against its foes. We have borne testimony,

¹ Gallia Christiana, T. iv., p. 144.

with conscientious fidelity, to the errors and to the crimes of Frederick, and we have seen how he was anathematized and excommunicated during the greater part of his life ; we have also seen his great genius and his greater triumphs. Can anyone doubt the secret of the latter to lie in the detestable perversions of the fundamental laws of morality practised by his ecclesiastical enemies ? —actions which revolted all the more reasoning and better minds from the hypocrisy, rather than the crimes, of priests. The insatiable rapacity, so long and so justly the reproach of the Papacy, now showed its most ignoble features in the conduct of the Genoese Pope, Innocent IV. Not content with the onerous burdens imposed on the city of Lyons, he used every lowest artifice to fill his coffers. Prelates anxious for preferments bribed him with heavy sums. The wealthy Abbot of Clugny, besides a great gift in money, sent him eighty palfreys, and one “Chinea,” with a baggage horse for every cardinal in his suite. Other abbots followed the significant hint, and were well rewarded by being named to bishoprics and to benefices. Treasures in gold, silver, and jewels were heaped upon Innocent, who, notwithstanding, persisted in the perpetual monotonous wail of the practised mendicant, declaring himself smitten with “extreme penury, and driven to destitution and exile.”

The utter want of decency and delicacy when money is concerned has always been truthfully and deservedly commented upon in almost all transactions where the clergy or religious bodies are concerned ; but the combined avarice of the Genoese and the priest never before had been so publicly displayed to the gaze of a curious world.

Innocent declared the Roman Church to be weighed down by a debt of one hundred and fifty thousand lire, which sum was doubled by the interest due on it ; and this absurd plea for exaction always stood him good as a pretence for more and more begging. The chroniclers of the times are full of lively and quaint accounts of the murmurs and sometimes riots occasioned by the taxes

levied by the Papal instruments, who were naturally detested by the native and resident clergy.¹

This defect in the character of Innocent did not, however, in any way, of course, diminish his spiritual prerogatives as head of the Church, and his authority was supreme over a Council of his own convoking; as that of a priest must always be, when he holds the earthly destinies of his creatures entirely dependent on his will.

The representatives of the secular powers summoned to the Council remained passive; not one of the monarchs of Europe had the smallest fault to allege against the great Emperor; a circumstance which, considering his violent temper and exorbitant ambition, must always be remembered to his honour. The Sovereigns of Europe understood the Council to be merely directed to the end of solemnly deposing Frederick; and, as that ceremony had been so often and so vainly performed before, with every circumstance of religious pomp, they awaited, as spectators, the issue of the Council of Lyons, which was formally opened with great pomp on the 26th of June, 1245, by Innocent IV.

The first preparatory sitting was made in the Monastery of St. Just. The first solemn assembly took place in the Cathedral. After mass, the Pope, arrayed in his Pontifical robes, seated himself on a splendid throne, having the Latin Emperor of Constantinople, Baldwin, on his right hand; the Counts of Toulouse and Provence on his left. A few steps lower down, sat the great Chancellor of the Church and the private train of the Pope. Towards the right hand nave of the cathedral, sat the cardinals and bishops and great dignitaries, all in their robes, and below them, innumerable ecclesiastics of lesser degrees, all with scarlet caps, like cardinals, in token of the "Church triumphant." In the left nave, sat the three patriarchs, the metropolitan clergy, the bishops, and episcopal priests; below them, the canons of the cathedral, delegates, and so on.

¹ Albert de Beham. *Reg. in Bibl. litt. Stuttgart*, T. xvii. p. 112. *Matt. Paris*, p. 447.

The ambassadors of foreign sovereigns and the Imperial representatives had seats apart. After the *Veni, Creator*, intoned by the Pope, had been performed, he opened this important and most interesting Council, with a discourse on the following text: "Secundum multitudinem dolorum meorum, in corde meo consolationes tuæ lætificaverunt animam meam."

He numbered five chief causes for his deep afflictions. First, the reprehensible conduct of the bishops and their subordinates; then the victories of the Saracens in the Holy Land; the Greek schism; the devastation of the Tartars, and the persecutions inflicted by the Emperor Frederick on the Church. Having touched deprecatingly on the first four topics, the Pontiff, with tearful eyes and in an agitated voice, enumerated his accusations against Frederick. All the accusations which, for twenty years, had been brought up by his predecessors against their rival were recapitulated with their accustomed acrimonious monotony. Taddeo di Sessa was admitted to defend his master, and he declared his greatest desire to be the destruction of the enemies of the Faith, Tartars, Karismeni, or Turks, or Mahomedans, the restoration of the Holy Land, and all the property of Jerusalem and the estates of the Church, and the return of the Greeks to the rule of the Faith.

"These are all magnificent promises," returned Innocent, with indignation, "and they are most probably made to lead the Council into error, and to turn away the hatchet ready to cut off the tree of evil. But supposing we grant ear to the assertions of this excommunicated Prince, who is to be his sponsor in this case?"

Taddeo di Sessa brought forward the names of the Kings of France and England as guarantees for the fulfilment of his master's engagements. These Innocent at once rejected, candidly avowing that if Frederick failed in his word, he did not choose to embroil himself in dissensions with the two great kings who were the chief supports of the Apostolic throne. After this, the session was abruptly closed.

The second session opened by the moving appeal of the Italian prelates, who had been most deeply wronged by Frederick ; and in addition to their own accusations, which were well justified, they went on to heap on his name every amount of the foulest language and crimes which could be uttered against a man and a sovereign.

Taddeo di Sessa intrepidly demanded that these charges should be laid before the accused, who would come and justify himself in person from them. To this the Pope loudly objected ; but, on the remonstrances of the ambassadors of France and England, he was obliged to withdraw his prohibition.

Frederick, who had learnt with anxiety the Crusade against him in Germany, headed by the Archbishop of Mayence, and who knew that the Council was assembled solely to repeat the act of anathema and deposition of Gregory, changed his intention of appearing in person ; if, indeed, he had ever contemplated an act which must have given umbrage to the King of France ; but he commissioned his private chaplain, Walter d'Ocre, Bishop of Freisingen, Pier delle Vigne, Judge of the Supreme Court in Sicily, and the Grand Master of the Teutonic Order, (a body generally faithful to him, and ever disposed to mediate between him and the Pope), to represent and defend him before the Council. They reached Lyons on the 20th of July, the day exactly prefixed for the appearance of Frederick ; but such was the terror that even then, and on that neutral and distant land, his presence and defence excited, that Innocent laid aside every semblance of decorum and fair dealing, and on the seventeenth hurriedly assembled the small number of prelates in Lyons to hear his final sentence.

Taddeo di Sessa remonstrated on the small number gathered together for so momentous a sentence ; but was stopped by the violence of an angry despot, determined on carrying out his own will. The Patriarch of Aquileia at this crisis must ever be named with honour, for he had the integrity to proclaim, as a protest against the injustice

of Innocent, that "the world rested on two columns, namely, the Church and the Empire."

But he was angrily silenced by the Pope, who threatened to deprive him of his pastoral ring.¹

The English ambassadors tried, in vain, on this last day of a Council so irregularly hurried to its close, to call attention to the overbearing and insatiable rapacity of the Pontifical agents in England. Innocent replied hurriedly that their complaints should meet with due attention on a proper occasion; but his anxiety to curse and depose his greater foe was irresistibly bursting from his lips.

His discourse offered nothing new; the same accusations and the same frantic reviling had been long familiar to the Christian world; but the voice and manner of Innocent were more striking than those of so very aged a man as Gregory could be. After recapitulating his long catalogue of grievances against Frederick, he said he had four chief crimes to urge against him—the violation of peace continually following promises of its maintenance; reiterated acts of perjury; the sacrilegious capture and subsequent maltreatment of the Church dignitaries, captured on their way to council; and the crime of "Heresy,"² of which he had irrefragable proofs.

Of the violation of oaths he offered many examples. At the time of his Imperial coronation at Rome he had made distinct promises of fealty and obedience to the See of Rome; which, though repeated on three occasions in the most solemn manner, had never been carried out. The first of these deliberate and voluntary engagements was taken in Rome, ere he quitted for Germany; the second at Haguenau, in presence of the princes of the Empire; and lastly, during his final consecration by the hands of Honorius.

On making liege homage to the Pontiff, as he then did

¹ Labb. Council, p. 639. Matt. Paris, p. 450.

² Sentence of Deposition of Frederick II. by the Council of Lyons, 17 July, 1245. Reg. Inn. IV., ann. 3, n. 14, fol. 208. Concil., p. 640 et seq. Matt. Paris, p. 451. Chron. de Reb. in Ital. Gestes, pp. 197, 205.

for the Crown of Sicily, he had vowed to maintain the rights of the Roman Church intact, to defend her territories, to make due restitution of all such portions of St. Peter's patrimony as might fall on occasion into his hands.

"Since that time," said Innocent, with increasing vehemence, "he not only has violated his solemnly sworn triple oath, but he has dared to bring forwards the foulest aspersions against the fair fame of our predecessor Gregory, to menace our brethren the Cardinals, and to address injurious missives to them. Having caused the arrest of two Pontifical Legates, he caused them to be dragged from prison to prison; and," he pursued, still more agitated, "he has even denied to the visible head of the Church the privilege conceded to Peter and to his successors by the following divine charge—*Quodcumque ligaveris super terram erit ligatum in Cœlis*.

"Having himself rebelled against the sentences of excommunication levelled against him, he has forced his subordinates to follow his example in contempt of the Apostolic power; he has possessed himself of Benevento, which he caused to be destroyed; of the Marches of Ancona, and of the Pontifical domains in Lombardy and Tuscany, and elsewhere, though he has continually promised the restitution of these countries."

He then proceeds to enumerate his various crimes, all of which had been so often repeated before; but to these was added a new offence—the marriage of the daughter of Frederick with Vatace, the late Greek, and, therefore, schismatic Emperor of Constantinople.¹

"It is given to us as certain," pursues Innocent, "that he caused the death of the Duke of Bavaria, a devoted son of the Church, who was murdered by the agents of the 'Old Man of the Mountain.'"

He refers to his alliance with the Mahomedans; to his following their domestic customs, even in the palaces of his Imperial brides; to the rich gifts exchanged with infidel chiefs; to the "impious" *treaty of peace*, in

¹ Sicut pro certo asseritur.

accordance with which the service of Mahomet by Frederick's Saracenic auxiliary troops was permitted twice a day to profane the "Temple of the Lord," and many other more vague and general accusations. But he animadverted again on the sore point of the Sicilian kingdom, that grand "feudal tenure of the Church," cruelly oppressed by Frederick, "and for which he has refused to pay us the customary tribute of one thousand *schifati*, according to the covenanted dues."

"For such and every one of these reasons, after due deliberation, and with our brethren the cardinals and this Sacred Council,¹ we, who in spite of our unworthiness, take the place of the Lord Jesus on earth, and to whom it was enjoined through the person of the Holy Peter, that 'that which thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in Heaven,' we declare the said Prince to be bound and chained to his sins; to be rejected of God; unworthy of the rank he holds, and to be, in consequence, deprived of the sovereign dignity. We therefore liberate and absolve from their oath of allegiance all who have heretofore been bound by it; forbidding all, under pain of excommunication to obey him, and render succour, favour, or counsel to him. We finally enjoin such as within the Empire are possessed of the right of election, to proceed freely in the choice of another Emperor."²

"As far as the Kingdom of Sicily is concerned, we shall take care it shall be appositely provided for, as we shall think fit, after advising with the cardinals our brethren.

"Given at Lyons on the sixteenth day previous to the calends of August, during the third year of our Pontificate." (The day according to common usage was, as we have said, the 17th of July, 1245.)

Though this sentence had been fully anticipated, yet it produced so deep an impression that when the procession

¹ "Cum fratribus nostris et sacro-sancto Concilio deliberatione habita matura et diligenti." Loc. cit.

² "Illi autem in eodem imperio quibus imperatoris spectat electio eligant libere successorem." Reg. Inn. IV., loc. cit.

of clergy filed out of the cathedral with reversed tapers, pronouncing eternal curses on the great Monarch, Taddeo di Sessa, overcome with emotion, wept aloud. But the churches of the city sent forth a jubilant peal, and Innocent thought his immediate and miraculous deliverance was at hand.

He was mistaken ; great as was the religious superstition of the age, it could not blind common sense and justice so effectually as to cause it to be forgotten that this small council of mere creatures of the Pope had not been supported by one lay monarch. Innocent was not gratified by the crowning triumph of rancour and malice. The Germans, in spite of his most assiduous efforts, did not elect another Emperor. Rome and Italy did not recall him at once and in triumph. For five years Frederick fought a battle against him, a losing battle it is true, but losing as much from his own unbridled recklessness, temper, and violence as from the curses of the Council.

Defections from fear, from motives of conscience, and from self-interest, he had to endure, but his own uncurbed passions and his evil conscience were his bitterest foes.

On hearing of this renewal of his previous deposition by Gregory, Frederick addressed expostulatory letters to all the sovereigns of Europe. In these he confessed his many sinful acts, and fully admitted the Pontiff's right to reprimand him on all "spiritual points." But he denied his right to confer and abolish temporal kingdoms and civil dignities.

The Pope retorted furiously, all the more that the significant silence of the monarchs of Europe made him feel these "fallacious and frivolous" arguments were highly acceptable to them. Even the pious Louis of France refrained from testifying, in any way, approbation of the sentence of deposition of Frederick. On the other hand, the monarchs were far too wary, in the face of the vehement rising and increase of the "Paterini" (or, as we should now say, *democratic spirit*), to quarrel with the Pope, on the score of any of the abuses of the Church, which Frederick so truly and so violently urged

on their notice. And thus both combatants, partly triumphant and partly disappointed, were left, by the wisest and most rare moderation in their neighbours, to fight out their own battles.¹

Frederick did not hesitate to employ language quite as intemperate as the Pope's. "What! does this man of mean descent² dare to launch me, the first potentate of the earth, who neither recognises an equal nor a superior, from the throne; does he pretend to tear off my crowns?"

Here he ordered his various jewelled crowns to be brought before him; he adjusted one on his brow, and exclaimed, in a voice almost inarticulate from passion, "It is mine; it is mine, and whatsoever betide me, it shall still ever be mine."³

But though Frederick survived the Council of Lyons five years, and though he did die nominal Emperor still, yet he entered on a headlong course of infatuated misgovernment, which seems to us to render more marvellous by far his not having been actually deposed.

His executions became frequent, capricious, and cruel. In the year 1248, after a siege of eight months, he experienced a disastrous defeat from Parma, and, as he attributed this, justly, to the success of the Papal intrigues, he proceeded to outrage still more his Christian subjects, by tolerating the licence of his faithful Saracens, and by promoting officers chosen from their ranks to places of trust hitherto only filled by Christian noblemen. Many of the latter, of birth, capacity, and rank, were even dismissed to make way for the "Infidels."

In the year 1249, in a battle fought at Fossalto (near Modena), his natural and beloved son Enzo, King of Sardinia, fell into the hands of the Bolognese, and, though with a chivalric humanity that shines brightly in that ferocious age, this Guelph stronghold treated their youthful prisoner with every sort of kindness and indulgence, yet

¹ Matt. Paris, 459.

² Innocent IV. was, as we know, of a noble and wealthy family of Genoa, but in pursuance of the habits of the times, vulgar and obscure tales were repeated of its first origin.

³ Matt. Paris, p. 458.

on no consideration would they ever be persuaded or bribed to release him.¹

About the same time his favourite and celebrated chancellor, Pier delle Vigne, perished, a victim to Court intrigue. He had been appointed Logothete or Viceroy of the kingdom, and as such, his office as Vicar-General gave him boundless command over the revenues and privileges of the clergy. It was known that his influence had always been great, and that the measures taken to place them on a level with other citizens were advised by him. The clergy were, of course, his rancorous enemies, and in one of the many clerical conspiracies against the life of Frederick, which succeeded the Pope's cursings, his enemies contrived falsely to make it appear he had had a share.

The treachery which beset Frederick at every step may excuse his doubts, even of a friend so tried and so true ; but nothing can palliate the awful cruelty of his sentence. Pier delle Vigne was condemned to lose his eyes, and to be confined for life in the tower of San Miniato del Tedesco, where, according to tradition, he ended his life by dashing out his brains against the wall.

After this, Frederick never knew a moment of peace ; his cruelties against the Papal agents redoubled, and his encouragement of the licentiousness of his Saracens increased. The latter were but too gratified to be the instruments of his vengeance on the Minorite and Dominican friars, who, in obedience to Rome, swarmed in the Southern Provinces, and met death with the intrepidity of martyrs.

As we have observed before, it often happens that convulsions of nature seem to harmonize with those of the political world. So it was at this moment ; violent earthquakes shook the soil ; a fiery comet glowed in the heavens : these visible messengers, as they were believed, of *wrath of God*, were accompanied by deficient crops and consequent famine and plague. Chroniclers relate that, in

¹ Enzo survived, twenty-two years in this gentle captivity, and was the founder of the celebrated family of *Bentivoglio* of Bologna.

the minds of the awe-stricken populations, these symptoms of *Divine anger* foreshadowed grave events. At this moment the end of Frederick drew near. Restless and wretched, the prey of disease and of remorse, wandering from place to place in search of repose, he was suddenly taken so ill of fever and dysentery, that it became absolutely necessary to halt at Castel Fiorentino, a delicious Imperial residence six miles from Lucera,¹ the city he was bound to.

What follows, we repeat on the faith of the chroniclers of the day, though it seems rather to enter on the domain of legend.

It is said that an oracular prophecy had warned Frederick, who placed the fullest reliance in astrology, "to beware of any abode or city in the name of which the term of *flower* should appear predominantly ; and of an apartment with an 'iron door' in it, for in that chamber he would breathe his last." The name of Castel Fiorentino fulfilling the first of these predictions, Frederick, in great trepidation, next eagerly commanded that a search should be made for the "iron door," in the chamber which had been prepared for him ; and there, exactly behind the bed on which he was about to be laid, an "iron door," leading to a private passage was discovered. He now, it would appear, *felt certain his death was at hand*, and exclaimed with fervour, "My God ! into thy hands do I commit my soul ! Thy will be done !"

This appeal, at such a moment, speaks more eloquently than the most lengthened homily. His malady became worse and worse ; on the 15th of December, 1250, he died. The Archbishop of Palermo, who had never forsaken him, nor ceased during his latter years to try and instil the sentiments of Christian penitence into his angry heart, attended him to the last. It is even asserted he administered the sacraments of the Church to him ; but whether he did so or not, he soothed his latest hours by his friendly care and pious exhortations. One only of his children saw him expire, his natural son, the

¹ Salimbeni, f. 348, col. 2. Matt. Paris, p. 777.

generous, brave and romantic Manfred, and against this victim of Papal-jealousy and hatred was afterwards brought the calumnious aspersion of parricide !

We have not extenuated the crimes that stain the memory of Frederick II., nor have we hesitated to dwell upon the vast and despotic rule of the most Oriental stringency which he contemplated to put upon Italy. We have also been careful to point out how his reckless defiance of the received manners and customs of his country, his unbridled licence, and his avowed preference for many Eastern habits, incensed gratuitously those it was his best interest to conciliate. But when all these drawbacks are amply allowed, his genius remains still to perplex and to astonish us. His command of his German Empire, in spite of neglect and absence ; his success in the Holy Land, in the teeth of Papal and Christian persecutions ; the flourishing agriculture and finance of his Southern Provinces ; and the mastery he held for so long in central Italy, in defiance of the wildest invectives and most savage and reiterated curses from Rome, and the far more just and merited fear and enmity of the Guelph cities, all strike us with the utmost admiration. Nor can we avoid repeating and recalling to the memory of the reader that this great monarch stands alone amongst his peers in the perfect harmony of his relations with his brother sovereigns. No act of aggression against his neighbours was ever laid to his charge, even against the Saracens in the Holy Land. His influence, personal, and by negotiation, opened the way to the safe worship of the Holy Sepulchre, despite the intrigues of Christianity, with comparatively little bloodshed. We cannot regret his fall, as his despotism would have retarded the development of Italian municipal civilization for half a century ; and we can even enter into the implacable detestation of Rome for a great prince to whom her curses seemed to bring but blessings and glory : and with divided feelings of admiration and of regret, we close the page over the brilliant figure whose reign closed that period imme-

diately preceding the close of the Middle Ages. Before doing so, we must, however, also bear in mind that during his reign, and at his brilliant Court of Palermo (where the flower of European and Eastern society was convened), the first great impulse was given to the revival of Italian literature. Knowledge, science, and art were likewise liberally encouraged by him.

It was from the Court of Palermo, "the city of cities" as we have seen it called, that the great current of literature, which afterwards irrigated society at large, was cast on Central Italy (Tuscany and Florence). The central *Representative Man* of this new period is the poet Dante Alighieri, who brought the past civilization into a focus with the present, depicting the manners, customs, and habits of his own and other times with the mastery of unrivalled skill. Greco-Latin, Byzantine, Arabic and "scholastic" antecedents, the whole sweep and character, in fact, of the Middle Ages, its dogged philosophy and the theories of the *Catholic Dogma*, all blended in his pages like rivers in a common sea. The imaginary and the real, the past and the present, together with the eternal instincts and passions of actual man (boldly *individualized* with a modern hand), found place in the magic pages of his "Divina Commedia," together with the "Drama of Heaven, Hell, and Purgatory," by the side of those grander aspirations after infinite truth and wisdom which mark their author as a man of our own times.¹

¹ Dante Alighieri, born, as we all know, 1265 (shortly after Frederick II.'s earthly career was closed), gave, in his "Divina Commedia," the best and most compendious history of the times lately alluded to, whilst he produced the greatest poem ever written in the Italian vernacular tongue.

CHAPTER XIII.

The Historical and Æsthetic Development of the Past and Present in Art, as illustrated in Ancient Greece, Byzantium, and the Southern and other Provinces of Italy, &c.

THERE is a natural analogy between man and nature, which brings his instincts and sentiments into harmony with the outward bearings and circumstances in which he stands, and seems to shape his purposes, his aspirations, and his acquirements in accordance with the surrounding landscape, sky and objects of existence, forming, as it were, the living atmosphere in which he dwells. That exalted perfection of abstract beauty which is known as the "Ideal," is simply the expression of the highest order of art; reproducing, in its purest and least material form, the choicest order of created beings; and it is thus that the favoured race of the Hellenes, from accidents of climate and nature coinciding with the most exquisite sense of adaptation for the harmony of form, rose to the highest rank in the culture of art.

The landscape of Greece was marked by harmony of proportion in beauty, and a definite horizon; neither luxuriating in the indistinct tangle of forest verdure, nor encumbered with bleak heights, or extensive desert plains. Beauty, grace, dignity, and symmetry distinguished the forms and the instincts of the inhabitants. Æsthetic culture under these circumstances reached to a pitch which made it the common birthright. The people, in this gifted land, formed the aristocracy of the human race in its more divine attributes. They were the "lords" of the beautiful they so well conceived, and which they so highly valued; they were both actors in and judges of the common field of thought, of life, and of "action. All shared alike in the national education, war, the gymnasia, the public dances, and public games; all formed a com-

plete system of training for eye, body, and mind; and from this equipoise resulted those laws of harmony which characterize all the productions of the race.

The human figure, divested of all needless covering and perfected by athletic and graceful exercises, was perpetually present to the eye. We read of Alexander the Great rendering homage to the manes of Achilles by performing at his tomb the solemn dances of the dead.

The Hellene was born, was reared, and lived in an atmosphere of perpetual and yet of not overpowering beauty. The awful mysteries of the boundless ocean, and of the boundless steppes, or desert plains, were unknown to him. The Greek landscape suggested a magic charm, a presence of superhuman beings amidst the woods, the streams, the cliffs (which rise with a grace unknown elsewhere), and which seemed worthy of a race apart from the gay and artificial life of the cities as it is represented in our modern life.

No fiction ever approached the beauty of that of the birth of Aphrodite—rising from the pure white foam of those sapphire seas; this lovely image, which is hailed with delight by all who have lived in the warm and brilliant climate of the Mediterranean, is absolutely incomprehensible to a northern reader. The hymn of colour, from earliest morn to the gold and purple haze of sunset, must be seen to be understood. The farewell to nature of the sinking sun was called in the picturesque language of the Greeks the ‘*Basileusis*’ or the ‘*Reign*,’ as though that crowning hour assumed a supremacy over every other, as it glowed with all the radiance of nature’s parting smile.

The Greeks were colourists by instinct, by habit, by association, surrounded as they were by the brilliancy and harmony of colour at all hours and in all the daily scenes of life. In the Port were ranged, ready for the venture, barques with saffron sails and crimson prows, and hard by, fresh from camp, were seen stalwart warriors, in the sheen of burnished armour and of waving plumes.

Within the Athenian city “colour” was the marked

characteristic of the Agora, brightening it with every group of various hue and form. All ranks met on common ground on the market-place, from the slave to the white-robed patrician; and the strangers, gathered by business or curiosity, each in his national garb, contributed that bewitching mixture of colour and variety which makes an Eastern scene so indescribably attractive. Even the productions of the soil were marked by a purer glow of more blended tints than elsewhere: the bloom on the plum was more cerulian; the grape was of a deeper purple, or of a more sunny amber; the carnation and the rose of a delicacy more intense; the jessamine of a purity more starry.

It was long believed, and volumes have been written in support of the dogma, that the temples of Greece arose amidst this perpetually varying mass of blended tints, in the unsullied purity of their white marble harmony, and trusting solely to their majesty and consummate elegance of proportion to win the reverence of the people. No mistake could be greater; an immense surface of monotoned material would have seemed dreary and discordant to a southern eye. The excavations of Pompeii, and the study of Hellenic archæological art, have convinced us that the greater part of the Grecian temples were adorned with a beautiful polychrome colouring, and were continually restored, so as to present an incessant appearance of care and of cheerfulness. Colour was the animating principle of Greek art, as it was the animating feature of the natural landscape; colour systematically applied for the relief of the delicate ornaments on the capitals and basements; strong and deep in the columns, dark red in the cella of the temple; delicate lines of tracery added an ineffable charm to the more substantial decorations. The heads of Medusa or of the Sphinx which lightened the architecture were coloured in deep azure, projected on the blue mellowness of the sky. Sometimes the plain spaces were painted blue, green, or red, to form a background to the statuary of the friezes and frontispiece.

The statuary was often coloured also when the

harmony of an architectural whole demanded it. Traces of colour remaining on many statues recently excavated place this beyond doubt, and Pliny informs us that the "best statues" amongst the Hellenes were consigned to the "first artists" *to be painted*.

Even supposing this *staining* was limited to bathing the white marble in a mixture of *wax and yellow chrome*, to endue it with the mellow hue of ripe corn, so much admired by the ancients, there is no doubt but that many statues were painted in varied colours; red, blue, and green pigments, and gold having been found adhering to several statues recently excavated. But sometimes a bold and beautiful group of statuary designed for the frontispiece of a temple was left solely relieved by a blue or red ground.

The great sanctuary of Athens, the Parthenon, sacred to the tutelary goddess of Greece, the Virgin Minerva Athenæ, was, however, solely indebted to the majesty of size and of proportion for its consummate effect. It stood, in white marble, on the summit of the Acropolis, the deep blue sky of Athens supplying a background far surpassing any mortal tint. To those who have been privileged to see this peerless monument all descriptions of it are useless; to those who have not they are unintelligible. The faultless harmony of its majestic lines must be witnessed to be believed. Even so late as the seventeenth century the Parthenon had survived revolution, conquest, and barbarism; but in an ill-omened hour, a Venetian admiral, Carlo Zeno, firing hot balls on it, the cedar beams of the roof took fire, and we have only the ruins to admire.

In the welcome shade of this vast shrine stood the masterpiece of Phidias, the statue of the Virgin Divinity. She leant on her spear, and a winged Victory rested on the palm of her other hand. The face, neck, and arms were of fine ivory; the helmet was of gold; the well-known shield covered her breast; her robes shone in gold, glowing with enamels of the brilliancy of gems.

The real and the ideal are described as meeting in this celebrated statue, which seemed to breath out an atmosphere of light around her. The Grecian chisel wrought in the soft and mellow-tinted material all the highest intellectual graces of the ideal, and the gentlest and purest lineaments of human beauty. Around the statue of the goddess votive offerings were piled in rich profusion: shields of gold, wreaths of flowers, costly vases, —everything reverence could deposit on the shrine of the guardian spirit was heaped, making the interior of the temple softly radiant in its religious dimness. Plato has said, "There is a sympathetic correspondence between the qualities of purity, truth, and beauty. Indeed, we shall find that the most elevated form of purity is allied with the loftiest characters of truth and beauty."

These thoughts found an echo in the artistic mind of the Hellenes, and suggested the noblest conceptions of their sculpture; and they were the best interpreters of nature, for they took the human model and rendered it ideal, by the infusing of the three Platonic virtues into the marble.

These inner truths of the mind, aided by a peculiar gift of technical skill, form the basis of that perfection which Hellenic art attained, and which has never since been rivalled.

We have described the great Temple of the Parthenon standing on the Acropolis, against the heavenly blue of the summer sky. But it was flanked significantly by two lesser fanes of the same faultless elegance—that of the Cariatides, and of Fortune without Wings. To continue the analogy, we may state that the fundamental principle of Hellenic art was a reverence for noble and undisguised truth, but softened by beauty and illumined by purity.

By this influence and charm of the Athenian chisel all the coarser conceptions of man, the winged bulls of Assyria, the genii of Egypt, were transformed into aerial creations of celestial grace. Hermes flew with winged feet, inconstant Fortune floated on wings, but the pride of patriotism dedicated by the side of the Parthenon a lovely

Temple to her twin sister, "Fortune," "the *Fortune of the State*," which was to be permanent.¹

Researches have revealed to us that in Athens, no less than in art elsewhere, sculpture attained its last perfection by degrees, by careful study, by earnest perseverance, by deep thought, as well as by that crowning genius none of the above qualities can confer, though their absence cripples and distorts it; all these divine gifts combined produced that type of perfected beauty, sacred purity, and wisdom embodied in the typical choice of the guardian Deity of Athens, "Pallas Athenæ."

The choice of Aphrodite as a tutelary deity would have been unseemly in a land of philosophers; Jupiter was not the deity for a country of limited extent; Juno was incompatible with the grandest ideal of the Hellenes; Diana recalled too vividly the worship of Astarte across the Syrian seas. The instinctive genius of Greece perceived the vanishing nature of the worship of brute strength, as in Hercules, or the ensanguined trophies of Mars. It fixed rather on the eternal, the beneficent, the elevating, the *humanizing* virtues of Peace. It deified the olive branch and the ploughshare; the record which makes the future the heir of the past, and the wisdom without which the force of Hercules, the power of Jove, the splendour of Apollo and the valour of Mars never raise a people above the rank of barbarians.

Before this supreme type of excellency of matured wisdom, calm, pure, eternal, which was embodied in the ideal characteristics of Minerva Athenæ, the Athenians bent the knee in holiest worship; but theirs was not the harsh and sour bigotry which denies the expression of the softer and mere personal forms of devotion. The mariner was encouraged to propitiate Neptune; the husbandman prayed to Ceres; autumn brought the joyous revelry of the vintage god, Bacchus, and the sweet fragrant thickets of myrtle and oleander had their shrines for the timid wood nymphs and Hamadryades. All these fond and simple worships rejoiced innumerable hearts, but none of them

¹ The Temple of *Fortune Without Wings* is here again alluded to.

affected the adoration of the abstract genius of the country. Hence the choice of "Minerva" as the great Tutelary Deity of Athens, the flower of Grecian cities, must ever be admitted as a proof that Greece had attained the very highest development of human intellect—the recognition that purity and wisdom are gifts Divine!

Time brought another change in society; Christianity arose; all privileges of class were fused; man was instructed by fishermen and by other humble craftsmen; the lowliest virtues, those heretofore considered as the best recommendation of slaves, superseded the eloquent lessons of the learned. The legislative and patriotic virtues were neglected or decried; the human form was ordered to be scrupulously clothed; sculpture expired; but the instructive genius of the Hellenes developed in another form—it became the "historian" of the new religion in painting and in mosaic. Awful and majestic, and lovely and tender images continued to appear, and both were combined in the typical representations of the Saviour.

Though sculpture had ceased to produce statues, the latter still remained in profusion everywhere; they formed part of the daily furniture of the dwelling, and of the adornment of the street, the market-place, the piazza. We find in the illuminated works of devotion of the Ascetics ample proof that their minds were so stored with the science of art, by incessant familiarity with these models, that, in their lonely retreats, they bore away with them recollections vivid enough to influence their portraiture of Christian Saints and Virgins, without the necessity of referring to the living model. It has been long a disputed point whether the conventional representation of our Lord, with the oval face and parted auburn hair, is in accordance with some tradition of His bodily appearance on earth; or whether it is a pure ideal, imagined as a representative of perfect power, holiness, beneficence and mildness. We apprehend there can be no kind of doubt that a Grecian ideal was formed embodying this image infinitely higher than any mere Oriental

type. The Greek type has consequently been universally adopted by the Christian Church. The Oriental Christians, as we know, literally abolished sculpture, from their rendering of the ancient Hebrew denunciations against the "graven image;" but the devout monk, in the saintly forms his fancy suggested, invested them with a noble beauty, and represented the Saviour in the robes of a Roman legislator, and His mother, the Queen of Heaven, as an empress. The surviving works of this nature retain, after centuries, the correct drawing, dignity of *pose*, and technical skill of handling, which make them of inestimable value.

Sculpture was dead, but painting and mosaic reigned triumphant. Christianity arose from the catacombs, from the cavern, masked by sods and boughs, from the sanctuaries, rudely copied from the wayside shrines of paganism, and sought after a home.

First of the arts which in the East assumed a *Christian form* was architecture.

Man is, however, no worker of miracles; he can but enlarge, improve, exalt, adorn the materials he has at hand; and accordingly we find that in Syria, near the highly-cultivated city of Antioch, are first seen arising the new temples of the new religion; and this form of sacred edifice has never since been varied in any material point.

Passing over all previous attempts to erect churches worthy of the name, we come to the most perfect example yet known—the Church, now Mosque of St. Sophia, in Constantinople.

The era of Justinian, A.D. 532, beheld this glorious creation arise; two Ionians, Athenius and Isidorus, were the architects. The new edifice, like the ancient temples, was made brilliant by masses of the richest colouring; mosaic pictures, upon golden grounds, adorned the walls; the sacred vessels blazed with gems; the vestments of the clergy were of the sumptuous stuffs of the East. The richest marbles were wrought into the twisted columns, which recall the ancient serpent,

slain and moulded into familiar use by his eternal enemy, man; they also recall the capricious form assumed by the lightnings of Jupiter, descending from the sky in southern climates. Traceries of incredible delicacy and beauty were chiselled in the marble, now forbidden to assume a human image. It remains an open question whether a Christian church exists anywhere, of any age, equal to St. Sophia in the beauty of its interior.

This wonderful creation of Byzantine piety and genius was ready to be dedicated for public worship in six years, A.D. 537. Twenty years afterwards a portion of the dome fell in, during an earthquake. The church was repaired and dedicated anew in 563, very nearly as it now stands.

The influence of Christianity on Byzantium, and of the latter on modern civilization, has been heretofore neglected and underrated; by the hatreds of race, the rivalries of communions, the jealousies of power of the Greek and Latin races, and, above all, by the ignorance or unfairness of historical writers and chroniclers, who have neglected to take a comprehensive and critical view of this subject in particular, and of the true causes of the *revival* of art in Italy, into consideration, and have caused many errors to become popular. We know, however, on undoubted evidence, that throughout the whole earlier history of the Church the unbroken line of Christian Fathers were the living examples of the holy precepts they preached; they were the glory of their race and kind—as, for example, St. John Chrysostomus, the incarnation of moral strength, and unsurpassed in genius, erudition, and sanctity of life.

Again, from Byzantium the Saracens derived all secular knowledge, and the Western World all theological argument, embellished with its pathetic and exalted tales, its holy marvels, its strange and yet attractive myths, and all the symbolical imagery which teaches us the ineradicable bent of the human mind to adore material objects.

Byzantium offered the first example in Europe of that

Oriental pomp in the ceremonies of the Christian Church which the keen, practical sagacity of her Western sister adopted upon a basis of paganism, and which reconciled and endeared to her rule the wavering affections of a multitude alive to the holier precepts of Christianity, and to its wider aims of fraternal equality, but yet bound by habit, and by the natural Southern love of festivity, to the joyousness of the holidays which their forefathers had hailed as a respite in slavery.

Nor can the most sublime of all glories be forgotten, that which hallows the veneration of every educated mind for Greece; the glory never yet publicly recognised or taught with sufficient force when the question of the study of the classics is mooted. Christianity itself, in spite of its Divine Founder, of its ineffably lovely and pure morality, of its eternal hopes and of its consoling beliefs, never struggled beyond the precincts of an *obscure sect* until the Christians adopted and preached from the works of Plato.

The Byzantine style in ecclesiastical architecture influenced that of Italy for centuries. It was simple; four naves, or pillared aisles of equal length and breadth, were disposed at right angles to each other, so as to form as nearly as possible the exact form of the cross—habitually used by the Romans as the instrument of death for robbers, and, of course, that on which the Saviour of mankind expired.¹ These four naves or avenues met at a centre, over which a vast dome, with small openings for light, under the swell of the vaulting, were left. This dome, supported on massive buttresses, was intended to represent the heavens above us; and, in the grander Byzantine churches every nave was adorned by a smaller dome. Churches were invariably built from east to west; the sanctuary was in the eastern arm; the western was fronted by a porch. Sometimes the northern and southern arms were lined with galleries for women.

¹ The figure called the *Latin* cross has long been known as a mere artistic and fanciful alteration of the savage and ignominious cross of the Romans.

The first dome or cupola known in a Christian Cathedral was that of St. Sophia; the most perfect in splendour and in harmony of outline are those of Florence and of St. Peter's at Rome. But there are many choice examples besides those in Italy. When Justinian reconquered the Peninsula in 553, and made Ravenna his capital, the Byzantine style was introduced, and even now some relics of its splendours are preserved, as in the church of San Vitale. Charlemagne, when he visited Ravenna, was, indeed, so struck by this church that he chose it as the model of his own beautiful dome or cathedral at Aix-la-Chapelle. Specimens of the style may be seen in all the beauty of their details in Sicily and the southern provinces of Italy; and in the central and northern provinces may be seen the Duomo of San Ciriaco, at Ancona, of Santa Fosca, at Torcello (curious and beautiful from the completeness of its characteristic details), and the cathedral of San Marco, at Venice.

We may presume the Lombards to have had no architects or sculptors of their own, for their laws and inscriptions prove that they employed Italian workmen in those edifices, of a debased Roman style, erected in their reigns; and we know that the best of the *native builders*, the "*magistri comacini*" (or chief builders of Como), were by the Lombards raised to the dignity of "*free citizens*," exempted from servile labour, and encouraged to form a society, the members of which travelled throughout Italy and foreign lands, calling themselves, in virtue of their enfranchisement, the "*free masons*," as a contradistinction to all other masons, who were at that period subject to some one or other of the forms of slavery or serfdom universally prevalent.

These *magistri comacini* built after a mixed Roman and Byzantine style called the "*Lombard*." They introduced that excessive use of "*chimeras*" and grotesque monsters derived from the Jewish traditions, and probably all intended as derivations from the ancient Dragon of the East. Under Charlemagne the privileges of the "*free masons*" were increased. Artists or artificers from

other countries joined them ; Romans, Franks, Germans, and English recruited their ranks; to these must be added Greeks, driven from the East during the Iconoclastic persecution by Leo the Isaurian, and his son Constantine Copronymus. The elegance and refinement inseparable from Greek art influenced Italy in a sensible manner during the eighth century ; and the refusal of Gregory II. to obey the Iconoclastic decrees from Constantinople established the point of admitting "statuary," which the Orthodox Greek Church has always banished as idolatrous, amongst the objects admitted in the ritual of the Roman communion.

The Duomo of San Marco at Venice may be pronounced the choicest example of Byzantine art west of the Adriatic. Both externally and internally the lavish and costly ornamentation dictated by theological symbolism recalls the mystic Byzantium.

The five domes, the vaults, the walls, down to the triforia,¹ are everywhere incrustated with fine mosaics on a gold ground. The lower walls are lined with precious marbles; the pavement, which has become uneven by the course of time, is formed of rich "opus Græcanicum," so styled from its importation by Greek artisans from Byzantium.

The sanctuary, or eastern arm of the cross, is separated from the rest of the building by low, massive columns, supporting statues of our Saviour and the Apostles. The ciborium, with the sanctuary, is very curious. At the two extremities of the screen are seen two pulpits; that to the left is canopied by a baldacchino, and resembles those seen in the earlier mosaics of Oriental origin. The effect of the interior in the mellow semigloom is indescribably fine. A noble portico, crowned with six small cupolas, is also covered with mosaics, which extend along the western *façade* and the northern aisle, the corresponding southern wall being faced by the Chapel of San Zeno and the baptistery.

The Arabs, who at first had no style of their own,

¹ Galleries for women.

employed Christian architects and masons, and early adopted the style of Byzantium. They altered without scruple the churches that fell into their power to suit their own Mahomedan worship.

Following the path of the conquerors, innumerable instances may be remarked of these modifications, and of the fanciful graces of the style known as Saracenic, of which the Byzantine formed the basis. All the civilization of the Arabs was derived from Greece. The Mosque El Mehrak, built by Othman outside the walls of Bozrah, in the wilderness, on the Hadj road to Mecca, though now in ruins, and many other buildings, attest this; such as the Mosque at Lucknow, the Kremlin of Moscow, the Alhambra of Grenada, the Saracenic remains in Sicily, the Tombs of Saladin at Damascus, those of the Mamaluke Sultans near Cairo, and of the Ottoman Emperors of Constantinople; all have clearly the same derivation, as may be proved on historical and artistic grounds.

The most perfect designs, the finest technical methods, and all the higher creations of art came from Byzantium. Bronze gates, illuminated missals, rich "nielli" in silver and gold, miniatures of beautiful design, chiselled silver and gold vases, studded with precious stones, carvings in wood and ivory of elaborate ornamentation (some of which still survive among the treasures of western churches), all came from Byzantium. Not to multiply examples, we may cite but one: during the ceremonies of Easter, at Pisa, a "reliquary shrine" of silver, richly embossed and ornamented by the Byzantine chisel, is even now offered to public veneration; it contains earth from the Holy Land, brought over by the galleys of Pisa, which also brought the earth for the Campo Santo. This fact inspired the citizens to erect the famous colonnade, or cloister, which has become a museum of art. At Aix-la-Chapelle also were, and perhaps are still, seen the exquisite Byzantine reliquaries of Byzantine goldsmiths' work, enriched with miniatures on gold. We know by unquestioned records that throughout the Dark and Middle Ages Greek

architects were employed in every church and work of consequence in the Peninsula, in the decorative work of mosaics; it was not until the twelfth or thirteenth centuries that the Italians acquired or practised the art of the "opus Graecanicum," which formed the pavement of their beautiful churches, and the fine incrustations which adorned the "ciboria," and the pulpits, or reading desks, exclusively wrought by the Greek artists before that time. In the Southern Provinces innumerable remains of the highest beauty and value, baptisteries, pulpits, and bell towers, have lately been pointed out to public attention, for the most part the work of the Byzantines.

Wherever hierarchical art is found expressed in its noblest characteristics, north, south, east, and west, the composition, types, creative form, colouring and conception (noble, pure, elevated in the earlier, and debased and deteriorated in the later styles), are universally taken from the great initiative impulse of the Greek Church.

Frederick II., in whose great and cultivated mind literature and the fine arts bore so great a preponderance, was the first to encourage the revival of both in the Southern Provinces, where a school of art, following, in architecture, painting, and sculpture, the impulse given by Byzantium, was preparing the *revival* of artistic culture in its purely Italian form. Thus we find that Bronze Gates for the Cathedral of Trani, in the Kingdom of Naples, said to have been cast in Constantinople, and also those of Ravello, were of native source.

Where art and technical skill have advanced to the point of artistic castings of any magnitude in metal, we may feel certain that sculpture in the more ready materials of alabaster, marble, and stone has been executed with talent and abundant industry. We consequently find a youth named Nicola da Pisa emerging suddenly into the light of fame and celebrity, where, otherwise, in times preceding his advent in Tuscany (save in a few rude attempts, and excepting the *bronze doors* of Bonanno), no one before

him had yet illuminated the path of sculptural art. This youth, whose place of birth was Pisa, at fifteen years of age was attached to the Court of Frederick as "architect." It is known¹ that he attended the coronation of Frederick at Rome; that he directed the completion of the Castel Capuano and the Castel Dell' Uovo at Naples, and that he lived ten years uninterruptedly in that city. On his return to Central Italy we find him engaged in the erection of those works—Baptisteries, Churches, Pulpits—which are still among the most peculiar glories of art, and which are so immeasurably superior to all preceding ones that the step in progress would be incomprehensible if we did not know that Nicola's native genius had been educated by the prolonged study of the finest specimens of sculpture already extant in the Southern Provinces, where, evidently, an indigenous school, following the Greco-Roman classical traditions, had been formed in sculptural art—an art prohibited to be exercised by the Orthodox Chreh.

Simplicity, truth, elevation of expression, and refined dignity of form may be said to resume the elements of that eternal perfection in art which mankind constantly recurs to, after phases (as constantly recurring) of the worship of trick and mannerism. Thus, in the works of Nicola Pisano we find accordingly the desire to dignify the pathos of the Byzantine school, united to the classical elevation of the older types. At a later period the discovery of the finer models of Greece amongst the ruins of the past awoke the dormant genius of Italy, and brought about the so-called *Renaissance*, which, with Masaccio and the quattrocentisti, afterwards closed with the era of Leonardo, Raffaele, and Michael Angelo. But much work had to be done ere this reform was accomplished. Meantime Nicola claims the merit of having given a solid foundation to the great school of the Earliest Revival of Italian art.

The tomb of San Dominico at Bologna is perhaps the masterpiece of Nicola Pisano.

¹ On the testimony of George Vasari.

In the ordinary Scriptural incidents he was usually called on to interpret, he could proceed on *conventional types*, and after established forms. But in the artistic description of the then recent miracles of a "contemporary saint," he was compelled to tax his inventive faculties to the utmost, and the world knows how he succeeded.

The inestimable work of Vasari brings clearly before our observation the indispensable necessity of guiding and educating genius by the habitual study of the best models, when the age of observation has been attained by the student. That with which our eyes have been familiar from infancy rarely makes an impression on us sufficient to arouse us to create. The eye may be habitually and unconsciously trained to criticise and condemn where it misses the harmony of outline and colour to which it has been accustomed; but to spring into a creative activity, the sudden shock of revelation is apparently necessary, for we find that a journey to Rome, the centre of all ancient art, has been found necessary to determine the bent of Italian genius.

What Rome was to the later artists, the Southern Provinces were to the earlier. But even now, in all their various artistic productions, the perpetual distinction of race may be traced, with all its robust realism, ennobled, as it often is, by a certain dignity and power of sentiment of the Roman art; yet we miss in the works of its disciples the grandeur and ineffable grace, the seraphic repose, the spiritual purity of the Greek.

A distinguished traveller and critic has happily defined this difference and drawn the line of demarcation: "After the remains of Athens," he says, "all the monuments of Rome seem clumsy and inelegant; the former seem the work of philosophers, the latter of gladiators."

The choicest examples of Byzantine art that have survived a thousand years of earthquake, fire, revolution, neglect, wars, and, almost worse still, "restoration," are to be found in Trani, Pantaleone di Ravallo, near Amalfi, and at Monreale, where the Bronze Gates, the counterpart

of those of Trani, are signed, like the latter, "Barisanus Tranensis." Some of the finest of these works are marked with the name of Nichole di Bartolommeo da Foggia, and from this circumstance an inference has sometimes been drawn that the great "Nicola," commonly called "*da Pisa*," was a native of the Apulian provinces, but there seems abundant evidence to believe him a native of Pisa.¹ It has not long since been discovered, through certain documents in the Archivio of "San Jacopo," at Pistoja, under date 1272, that Nicola is mentioned as "filius quondam Petri de Senis;" and under date 1273, "Mag. Nichole quondam *Petri de Senis, Ser. Blasii Pisani*" (Ciampi de Belli Arredi, page 35). The Fountain at Perugia completed in the reign of Pope Nicholas III., 1277-80, bears an inscription stating that Nicola Pisano was seventy-four years of age when he finished it; consequently he must have been born between 1205 and 1207.²

We shall later have to return to the works of this celebrated artist, but previously we shall offer a few hints on the subject of architecture as developed in Western Europe and the Southern Provinces.

We find even in our own day that conquerors, with a pious solicitude which must be the result of some innate aspiration of the heart, transplant into new regions the architectural forms of the hallowed edifices in which they have been wont to worship. Accordingly, we find the Christian conquerors of heathendom transplanting the mixed style called the "Lombard" over the face of heathen Europe, as they redeemed it from utter paganism.

This style retained the Byzantine cruciform plan, and the central sphere or dome, representing, as we have remarked, the vault of the heavens; but the arm of the

¹ In a former work of the writer of these pages, and published in 1865, entitled "Dante: His Life and Times," the hypothesis of Messrs. Crowe and Cavalcaselle as to the Apulian origin of Nicola was almost adopted; but more recent and complete researches have proved conclusive as to the truth of the long tradition claiming him a Tuscan.

² This fact is published, *in note*, in Le Monnier's last edition of Vasari.

cross opposite the sanctuary was greatly lengthened, and was erroneously believed to represent thus a more correct image of the instrument of the crucifixion. The new form had the more real advantage, in an inclement climate, of permitting processions under cover, and of sheltering a larger congregation of worshippers in view of the high altar.

The crypt and apsis retain the shape of the olden Roman basilica; the apsis, or tribune, having, however, pierced windows. The crypt is loftier, more complicated in architectural details, and almost resembles a subterranean church. The exquisite church of San Miniato al Monte, commonly called "Le Porte Sante," of Florence, affords an example at once familiar and complete of our description. The hospitable, kindly refuge of the open colonnade, or porch, is omitted; but at a secondary period, *tabernacoli* (as they are called by the people), or open canopies, or *porches*, are affixed over every door. These are often of exquisite workmanship, and protect mosaics, or groups of sculpture, from the weather; slender columns, often resting on typical monsters, support them.

Three doors adorn the western front, decorated with rich sculptured ornaments, in which the "vine" is a favourite figure. Sometimes this rich style of ornament is continued in belts round the sides of the edifice; sometimes, at a later date, the wheel of St. Catherine is represented as a window, above the central door. The roof, slanting on either side, terminates on the façade, either in three separate gables or in one vast pediment. Sometimes, as in the Lucchese territory and in Lombardy, small rows of beautifully interwoven columns and tracery run round the exterior wall in continuous galleries, surrounding the eastern apsis and cupola, and even the western or principal front: an ornament light, graceful, and peculiarly Oriental in its conception.

In the Cathedral of Cremona numerous slender towers spring upwards like minarets, and recall the Mahomedan houses of worship.

One of the most sumptuous Arabian mosques built by

Greek artists is the now Christian Cathedral of Cordova : it is six hundred feet in length, and two hundred and fifty feet in breadth ; three hundred and sixty-five columns of alabaster, jasper, and black marble support it (for the Italians borrowed from Byzantium the custom of adorning places of worship with many-coloured marbles and precious stones). This splendid Mosque was erected A.D. 778, under Abdarrahan, the Moorish king. The palaces of Venice, the celebrated piazzetta, and the Giant's Court, in the same city, are instances of the magic beauty of this peculiar mixed Byzantine and Saracenic style, and lend an enchantment to "Adria's Bride," which must be seen and studied to be appreciated ; there, especially, where the radiant and ever-varying play of the light and shadow of the atmosphere, that veils transparently the queen of the waves, gives to every architectural form a new loveliness and relief.

The Baptistery and the "Campanile," or bell tower, form distinct features in the "Italo-Lombard" ecclesiastical buildings. In the older churches, as at San Frediano, at Lucca, and in the Southern Provinces, the baptismal font was placed just inside the nave of the church ; the font was always circular, and frequently intended for the performance of baptism of adults by immersion, as is practised in the Greek Church. The Baptisteries, as at Parma, are of excessive antiquity. In Northern Italy they preceded the erection of the Cathedrals, and formed the rallying places for the assemblies of people called upon to take their oaths within their precincts, and they were considered holy and inviolable sanctuaries, as the custom prevailed in Italy of swearing the most solemn of all vows over the Gospel at the "baptismal font."

The "tower" has ever been the peculiar emblem of feudal power in Italy. The "Campanili" were frequently built as political and party manifestations, and were regarded with aversion or with fondness, according as the faction they represented was in power or not. The old Roman basilica, which was the earliest form of the Oriental Christian Church, remained the model

for many of the Italo-Lombard churches and baptisteries ; in these the round arch is exclusively used. But in time the Byzantine style was modified by taste, and by the wants of climate. In Italy we shall see it assume the character of a variety arbitrarily termed Lombard-Gothic, or " Italo-Romanesque " Gothic. In France, and on the borders of the Rhine, it was called *Gothic*, having been introduced by Charlemagne, the Teutonic conqueror, from Italy.

Religious architectural art, employed to interpret a mystic symbolism, reached its extreme perfection in the later Norman-Gothic. The Cathedrals of the north recall at once the mysterious and haunted forests in which the pagan Teutons bowed to the earth, and worshipped, in spiritual awe, their unseen God. The infinite perspective vistas, and the rich tracery and carving, melting in the twilight in the olden Cathedrals, recall the solemnity and vague interlacing of boughs and foliage in those same forests, whilst the windows of stained glass beam with the blessed light, and shine, like the mercy of God, on the "just and the unjust" alike.

Reverence, holy abstraction, infinite awe, celestial serenity, seem to be the expressions of the Northern Cathedral, but in the southern "Duomo," or Cathedral, the natural sympathies of life, with their holiday smiles, seem more at home. Brilliant colouring meets the eye everywhere ; frescoes, paintings, marbles, are to be found in them of every tint, like the landscape of the South ; and the churches are full of light, because the sun is perpetually shining and lending animation to every object around.

Sicily boasts of a variety of Byzantine architectural forms peculiar to the island. It is called *Sicilian Architecture*, because nowhere else can certain peculiarities which characterise it be exactly found ; it unites classic elegance with an indescribable lightness, grace, and richness of colouring.

The north-west of Italy was less affected by the Byzantine style (so far as any remains can be held as proof) than the rest of Italy ; and this, in spite of the perpetual intercourse of the Genoese with the Levant.

Recent researches by several distinguished persons, amongst whom is Cavalcaselle, have of late years opened up a new field for artistic and archæological researches, and struck by the beauty of the remains they have discovered, they claim for the Southern Provinces of Italy the supremacy of schools of early art.¹ The Cavaliere Salazaro, the patriotic and enthusiastic inspector of the Neapolitan Museum, was, after the above-named, the first who opened up this track. He caused attention to be drawn to some most interesting and neglected frescoes of a native school of art in the Church of "St. Angelo in Formis," in Capua, and this led him to suspect that many other early art remains might yet be saved from ruin. He therefore undertook several journeys in the Southern Provinces, and, with his kind permission, we shall avail ourselves of part of his interesting discoveries.²

The tours of the Cavaliere Salazaro, beginning at Amalfi, include the Calabrias, Apulia, and the Principality of Salerno, and have everywhere been rewarded by the discovery of artistic treasures of Christian art, from the fourth to the twelfth century, and later. Amalfi proved quite an interesting field of research. In its venerable Cathedral were found works in sculpture and painting which date from the time of the Republic; and beneath the church catacombs were discovered with fresco paintings of the fourth and fifth centuries.³

The very ancient Cathedrals of Ravello, Scala, and Majuri (the latter in a ruinous state) are also worthy of attention. Ravello, indeed, has a threefold claim to consideration. It contains not only a Cathedral and

¹ "A New History of Painting in Italy, from the Eleventh to the Sixteenth Centuries." By Crowe and Cavalcaselle. (Murray.)

² The Cavaliere Salazaro made the above-mentioned journeys solely at his own expense; but Government afterwards granted him some slight aid, and he has been enabled to have coloured drawings made of his most interesting discoveries. Since the time this work was originally prepared for the press, these drawings have been splendidly illustrated, in a noble work, a part of which has been already published, in folio, under the title of, "Studii sui Monumenti della Italia Meridionale, dal iv. al xiii. Secolo." Napoli, 1871-74.

³ These frescoes will be more particularly described in a future portion of this work reserved for an account of painting.

Pulpit of great beauty, but also an unique specimen of a private dwelling-house of the twelfth century, the Casa Rufolo, the latter a mixture of Gothic and Saracenic architecture; and, besides this, a priceless treasure, a bust of Sigilgaita Rufolo, dated 1271, and bearing the signature of *Nicola di Bartolommeo da Foggia*. This bust comes on us with the force of a revelation and a surprise when we reflect that a work of so much ideal beauty and technical skill of handling has descended to us from an age we considered as barbarous. Sigilgaita is described in her epitaph "as the fair mother of four sons." The brow of this matronly lady is serene and thoughtful; the features are delicate and yet dignified; a mural crown is placed on her head; the latter rests upright on a throat so graceful and life-like that it seems ready to start into movement. The sculptor signs himself thus: "Ego Magister Nicolaus Bartholomeo Foggia Marmorarius hoc opus feci."¹

Many examples of his beautiful compositions remain; and they indicate, not only his own genius and taste, but an advanced school of indigenous art; and in this school, as we may induce through historical criticism, lived Niccola Pisano up to his twenty-fifth year, that is, until his genius had been matured by study and thought. Public opinion must finally rest on the cathedral, the pulpit, and the bust of Ravello² with wonder and delight. But the tour of the Cavaliere Salazaro describes

¹ The inscription, copied on the spot, runs thus:—

"VIRGINIS ISTVD OPVS RVFVLVS NICOLAVS AMORE
VIR SICLIGAITAE PATRIAE DICAUIT HONORE.
EST MATTHAEVS AB HIIS VRSO IACOBVS QVOQVE NATVS
MAVRVS ET A PRIMO LAVRENTIVS EST GENERATVS
HOC TIBI SIT GRATVM, PIA VIRGO PRECOREQVE NATVM
VT POST IPSA BONA DET EIS CELESTIA DONA
LAPSIS MILLENIS, BIS CENTVM, BISQVE TRICENIS
CHRISTI BISSENNIS ANNIS AB ORIGINE PLENIS.

EGO MAGISTER NICOLAVS DE BARTHOLOMEO FOGIA MARMORARIVS
HOC OPVS FECI."

² In the work of Crowe and Cavalcaselle there is an ample description of these remarkable works.

many other monuments of the deepest interest. We shall be obliged, however, to touch more lightly on these, as it is impossible to convey any description of them to readers without the aid of illustrations. All we can hope to do is to attract notice to the fact of their existence.

In the Duchy of Salerno, once subject to the Longobards, there is the palace of the Longobard Prince Arrechi, with its archives of the eighth century. At Scala are interesting Longobard archives, pulpit, crypt, bassi-rilievi; at Benevento, part of the Church of St. Sophia, with sculptures, also of the Longobard period, of the eighth century.

At Capua is found another church, with various monuments, crypt, and with the tomb of a Longobard prince. Byzantine influence in the sculpture, painting, and architecture prevails.

St. Angelo, in Formis, built out of the materials of an ancient temple, contains the fine frescoes which will be adverted to at a later period. At Calvi has been discovered, as worthy of attention, the Cathedral. The grottoes of this locality are covered with primitive paintings. These grottoes served as the refuge of the population when driven out of the city by the invasion of the Saracens; and more detailed notice of them will be found at a subsequent portion of this work. At Carinolo, the church was erected by St. Bernard, in the eleventh century, and contains a fine sarcophagus.

At Santa Maria, in Cingla, in the commune of Ailano, there is a Longobard basilica, with paintings of the eighth century. At Sessa (anciently Suessa) there are remarkable bassi-rilievi of the eleventh century in the Cathedral, and beautiful mosaics, all in a decided Byzantine style.

At Gaeta exists still a remarkable church and belfry of the tenth century, the latter almost unsurpassed in beauty. There is also in the church a storied column for the support of the Paschal taper, the *Cero Pasquale*, which in ancient times was made of gigantic size, and figured conspicuously at all high festivals. At Fondi still exist, though in a ruinous state, the church and public buildings of the ninth and tenth centuries.

At Nocera is a most remarkable Baptistery of the fourth century. This font was built upon the ruins and with the materials of an ancient heathen temple; it is the most interesting relic we possess of the age of Constantine; the shape is circular, surrounded by a double row of twenty-four columns. The Abruzzi, Apulia, and Basilicata are full of interesting remains. At Foggia a few remains of the era of Robert Guiscard (the eleventh century) are still to be noted. There is also the remarkable Gate of the Palace of Frederick II., with the signature of Nicola de Bartolommeo di Foggia, the same as we have already seen at Ravello. At Lucera di Puglia there is the fortress of Frederick II., and the Cathedral; and at Castel Fiorentino, not far off, is still seen, though in ruins, the hunting seat or palace in which that sovereign breathed his last. At Troya, of the Norman era, there is a famous Cathedral and pulpit, and other monuments in good preservation of the eleventh and twelfth centuries. At Manfredonia, a town erected in honour of Manfred, the ill-fated and heroic (illegitimate) son of Frederick II., there is a Cathedral of the eleventh and twelfth centuries, with monuments, a fine crypt, and a Madonna carved in wood.

Monte Sant' Angelo was a great sanctuary, especially sacred to the Longobards, and the resort of pilgrims during the Middle Ages. The place is named after a grotto, dedicated to the Archangel Michael, and much revered by the Longobards. In addition to the curious old grotto, the Baptistery, of the eleventh century, is unique in beauty, and there are, besides, remains of sculptures and of paintings to be seen. At Barletta, which is more known, the Cathedral is of the twelfth century; in the Church of St. Peter are several works in sculpture; and in that of the "*Teutonici*" there are curious and interesting paintings. The old walls, too, of the city are standing.

At Basilicata, in the Church of St. Margaret, may be seen paintings and sculptures of much interest. The Cathedral is of the eleventh and twelfth centuries. At

Trani stands the Cathedral to which belong the celebrated bronze doors by Barisano di Trani. These works, along with those of "Nicola di Bartolommeo di Foggia," establish the claim of the Southern Provinces to the initiative in the Revival of Art. Both paintings and sculpture of the era are found in this Cathedral and in other churches, all of the like epoch. Bitonto boasts of two pulpits of the twelfth century, in the fine Cathedral, and of fine old sculptures and paintings, all of the same century.

At Giovanazzo there is a Cathedral of the twelfth century, and a very curious painting of the time *executed in oil upon canvas*, and afterwards stretched upon panel.

At Molfetta, fine Cathedral, with sculptures, etc. Baptistry suited for the *entire immersion of adults*, according to the Greek rite (and uniform, in this respect, with all the Baptisteries in the Southern Provinces hitherto enumerated).

At Ruvo, Cathedral of the twelfth century; the façade is adorned with sculpture and paintings. The effigy of the founder, life-size, is here seen sculptured, in a sitting posture.

Andria has churches of the most ancient dates, with paintings and subterranean vaults, and a Cathedral of the twelfth century.

Castel del Monte, Palace of Frederick II., in tolerable preservation, and unique in beauty of structure, and in splendour of coloured marbles and in details, of the date between 1240 and 1244.

This splendid ruin has unfortunately now fallen into the hands of small rustic proprietors, and is used as a *sheepfold* and shepherds' dwelling-place; nor is it easily accessible, which makes a trustworthy account of it all the more valuable.

The plan¹ is octagonal, with octagonal turrets at each angle; it measures 167 feet across its extreme breadth, and is built round a court-yard 57 feet in diameter.

¹ This is found noticed in Mr. Fergusson's excellent work on the History of Architecture.

Both stories are vaulted, and the details are good and in excellent keeping. The great characteristic of the civil architecture and of the sculptured ornaments of Southern Italy is that they partake of the so-called style of the Renaissance, a circumstance easily explained when we recollect that the materials of the ancient classic temples were employed in the erection of the new Christian churches and other public edifices; and that old classic models and traditions abounded in a country which, though it had altered the names of its Deities, was but very superficially converted, and never would submit to the iconoclastic edicts. At Canosa is the tomb of Bohemond, of the eleventh century; also bronze doors, remains of Byzantine paintings, the chair of the bishop, and some fine sarcophagi are there to be found.

At Cerignola there are several ancient paintings in the churches.

At Lecce a church founded by Tancred is still seen.

At Brindisi the church of San Giovanni Battista, founded by Bohemond, may be seen. It was once entirely covered with paintings, of which the remains are still visible.

The remains of a church erected in the reign of Roger II., and other ancient churches, yet remain at Brindisi also.

Gioia has the remains of another Palace of Frederick II.

Altamura has a Cathedral, with sculptures of the Swabian era. But to catalogue all would be interminable. The provinces of Aquila, Chieti, Teramo, San Giovanni di Teramo, Basilicata, and the Calabrias abound, so to speak, to superfluity with objects of art hitherto almost unknown, and generally neglected and despised.

Our brief hints as to the treasures we have been permitted to allude to by the kindness of the Cavaliere Salazaro must, however, have awakened in the minds of our readers curiosity, astonishment, and interest; nor is it possible to refrain from a sigh, when we consider that, in addition to war, to faction, to ignorance, and to time, the fine arts had to struggle, in the Southern Provinces,

against the most direful and irresistible of all foes—the earthquake, and that, judging by what remains, innumerable works of art must have perished in these great convulsions of nature.¹

Most of the Apulian churches possess crypts of extraordinary beauty, quite equal in an architectural sense to that of San Miniato al Monte, near Florence (and better known by the popular term of *Le Porte Sante*). Others are even superior, and afford perspective effects of columns only to be found in the Cathedral of Cordova, or the “Cisterus” at Constantinople. Of these crypts those of the Cathedral at Otranto and of San Niccolo di Bari are amongst the finest examples.

Again, many of these churches are perfectly wonderful as specimens of elaborate decoration, and the Cathedral Church at Matera² may be cited perhaps as that in which the art is shown in the highest perfection. On the south side, which faces the Piazza, are two entrances; that towards the east is, as usual, the richest. Above the doors is a range of elaborately ornamented windows, and one of these, a little out of the exact centre, is far more splendid than the rest. From this window rescripts and epistles from the Greek Patriarch of Constantinople used to be read aloud to the people. This window is one of, if not the most rich and varied specimen of ornament and of finished workmanship to be found in the province. Mr. Fergusson says: “The same exuberance of decoration continued to be employed down to the latest period of art, and after the ‘Northern’ forms had been introduced by the Angiovine dynasty at Naples.” The doorway of the Church of Pappacoda (Naples) is a type of many to be found in that city and elsewhere in the architectural province.

The avowed influence of the religious art of Byzantium as well as of the language of Greece was indeed slow in

¹ The difficulties attendant on a tour in the Southern Provinces (owing to want of accommodation and bad roads) are nearly unsurmountable and gives great importance to the researches of Salazaro.

² See Mr. Fergusson’s “History of Architecture.”

losing ground in the Southern Provinces. Even after the Latin rite was established in the churches we find in many of those provinces, the Greek service continued long to be performed simultaneously with it, though in another part of the building.

Records still extant prove that Greek was the habitual language spoken by the educated classes, and even to this day, in rural life, in some of the provinces, youths sing, under the windows of fair maidens, love songs, handed down by tradition, in a sort of *rustic Greek*; bearing about the same relation to the language of Homer that rustic Latin bore to that of Virgil. The monks of the order of St. Basil (the only one recognised in the Orthodox Greek Church) also instructed the higher orders in the Greek language, and held schools for youth in the numerous monastic establishments they possessed in the Southern Provinces.

Public colleges, in which Greek was the only language spoken, were originally founded at Otranto, Nardo, and in other provinces¹, and were never formally suppressed. Numberless MSS. are found in the Greek language dating from the Swabian and Norman era. Frederick II. is described as being a perfect master of the language. But the most important and convincing proof of the influence of the Greek language was the publication of the "Laws and Institutions" of Frederick II. These were intended as the code of the Kingdom of Sicily and Naples, and were written both in Greek and in Latin; the former was spoken and written in the debased form known as Alexandrine Greek, and is much the same as has come down to our days; it is not so noble and pure, indeed, as that of ancient Greece, but it is a harmonious and varied and impressive language, living and breathing still over a great part of the Levant. The dialect called *Romaic*, or *Lingua franca*, which has been adapted to suit the commercial and daily wants of innumerable populations, is based on a very impure Greek; and from that foundation it springs into many accommodating transitions, which render it indispensable to the lower orders.

¹ Signorelli, "Vicende della coltura delle Due Sicilie."

Having brought out the direct proofs of the influence of Byzantium on art in the Southern Provinces of Italy, and hinted at the manner in which from this fount it laid seed on Tuscan and Italian ground, we shall now endeavour to trace the bias it afforded to the *Saracenic architecture*, and to the origin of the *pointed arch* (the latter a much disputed subject), all three styles being blended in their highest perfection in Sicily, from whence they were copied in other parts of the Mediterranean.

Mr. Fergusson points out that the state of political dissolution of the Western Empire prevented any form of architectural perfection being attained in it of an original kind *until after the eleventh century*. But during the period between 300 and 500 A.D., though the Byzantine Empire had attained great perfection in its own style, churches and public edifices continued to be built elsewhere in the Mixed or Romanesque style. Constantinople, Rome, and Ravenna were, it must be remembered, chief cities in one empire, and the inhabitants of each were striving to convert a "Pagan" into a "Christian" style. The buildings at Palmyra, Jerash, or Baalbec, Nice or Merida are barely distinguishable from those of the capital; and the problem of how the heathen temples could be adapted to Christian worship was the same for all.

A colony of merchants from Amalfi first obtained permission from the Caliphs to settle in Syria, and to build a church there. We have before remarked how faithful colonies are, in every land, to the architectural forms of the churches they have always been accustomed to worship in. Following this rule, the Amalfites caused theirs to be built after the manner of their own churches in Italy, and the Italian colonies of Pisans and Genoese copied the same example. We consequently find in the remains of the ecclesiastical buildings about the factories or settlements of these a closer resemblance to the Latinized style, and a greater departure from Byzantine models, than we do in the churches of the Southern Provinces of Italy, on the eastern and more exclusively Greek side of the Peninsula.

Mr. Fergusson (so often before quoted) remarks, on the Church of the Holy Sepulchre at Jerusalem: "For a century or more before the Crusades the Christians had been debarred from approaching the Sacred Dome erected by Constantine over the Holy Rock, which still contains the cave, the salutary monument of the resurrection of the Lord, and had been obliged to content themselves with a temporary church of very moderate pretensions, erected in their own quarter of the city. In this latter building the Easter rites had been celebrated since the year 1048, and when the Crusaders, in 1099, achieved the unexpected deliverance of the city from the Moslem, it seemed to the uncritical intellect of the age better to retain the church where it was than to unsettle the belief of the ignorant by transferring it back to its original site.

"The 'Dome of the Rock' now known to European travellers as the 'Mosque of Omar,' was, throughout the twelfth century, considered as equal in sanctity to the Church of the Sepulchre, and the veneration with which it was regarded had no doubt considerable influence on the architecture of the age. When the Crusaders reached Jerusalem, the Sepulchre appears to have stood in a court open to the sky, with five small chapels attached to it."¹

The "Church of the Sepulchre" was apparently rebuilt by the Crusaders about the year 1130. The plan differs entirely from a Basilica and independent tomb-house, (the Basilica adopted seven centuries before by Constantine). The earliest example of the Latinized cross style is in the Church of St. George at Thessalonica; it was developed more at Bosrah; it was afterwards employed in the north of Europe, and attained perfection at Cologne, in the Church of St. Gereon. So far as accounts remain to us, the style (before the fire of 1008; after which the rotunda was entirely rebuilt) was tolerably homogeneous. The circular part, dedicated in 1140 (built the first), had round arches. The choir and apse, dedicated 1169, show the favour the so-called Gothic, or *pointed style*, had acquired, but the decorated portions

¹ Sawulf, Peregrinatio, &c., A.D. 1102-3, p. 83.

still retain the *circular form*. The exterior is plain, but there is a magnificent southern double portal, erected apparently between the years 1140 and 1160. Two rich classical cornices unsymmetrically built in, as string courses, amidst the details of the era of the Crusades are of the time of Constantine, and probably formed part of his Basilica, destroyed in the beginning of the eleventh century by El-Hakem, and the ruins of which must have strewn the ground when this church was built.

Although the church of the Holy Sepulchre was the greatest work undertaken by the Crusaders, there were six or seven other churches in Jerusalem,¹ or its immediate vicinity, which were erected during the twelfth century.

One of the most perfect churches of this age out of Jerusalem is that of Abû-gost, the ancient Kerjath-Jearim. "Externally it is a rectangle, 86 feet by 57, with three apses, which do not appear externally; under the whole is an extensive crypt. Though small, it is so complete and so elegant in all its details that it would be difficult anywhere to find a more perfect example of the style. It originally depended on painting for its decoration, and traces of this may be still seen on its desecrated walls; it is now used as a cattle shed.

"The church of Ramleh, so celebrated in the East, is one of the largest, and must originally have been one of the finest of these Syrian churches. It is now used as a Mosque."

At Sebaste there is a church as large as that at Ramleh, 160 feet by 80, and showing a more developed pointed Italian-Gothic style. De Vogüé is of opinion that both these last-named churches must have been completed before the year 1187; the *pointed style* was, therefore, in favour in the East half a century before it was adopted in the West. There is a Gothic² building, as

¹ All these churches are carefully described and delineated by Count de Vogüé in his beautiful work, entitled "*Les Eglises de la Terre Sainte*." Paris, 1860.

² Though the term *gothic*, as applied to this architecture, is evidently a *misnomer*, it is used as the only one whose meaning is generally understood.

advanced as any of those mentioned, within the inclosure of the "Mosque of Hebron." It must have been built before 1187, since the Christians never had access to the place after their defeat at Tiberias; this must either be a Christian building without the distinctive arrangements of a church, or it must be a Mahomedan Mosque, built in the pointed style, and consequently of extreme antiquity.¹

We have historically been led through a study of architectural monuments, to trace the rudimental efforts of Christian architecture in the East, especially in the city of Antioch. This great city of Antioch, the third in the world in size, wealth, luxury, and learning, was conspicuous as the first place where the disciples of the "new religion" separated themselves formally from the Hebrews, called themselves "Christians," and preached the Gospel to the Gentiles.

The rapid progress of Christianity, the wealth and station of the converts, and the high state of art in Antioch; prepare us to hear of Christian churches of corresponding importance in the city. Accordingly, we find the Byzantine Basilicas abound in Northern Syria; all belong to the first three centuries of the Church; the most remarkable is that of St. Simon Stylites, at Kelat Semân, about twenty miles east of Antioch. Its dimensions are very considerable, 330 feet long, north and south, and, as nearly as may be, 300 feet east and west, across what may be called the transepts. The centre is occupied by a great octagon, 93 feet across, on a rock in the centre of which the "pillar" of that eccentric saint originally stood.

The greater part of the conventual buildings belonging to this church still remain perfect, a fact which will startle many readers who are not aware how many of the primitive religious edifices in Syria remain erect, and only need "roofing" in to be habitable. The fine dry climate seems to have little effect on masonry; but the roofs having been of timber, were readily destroyed by fire.

¹ For further particulars regarding this building, see "The Holy Sepulchre and the Temple at Jerusalem." Fergusson, Appendix J.

All the buildings at Kelat Semân seem to have been completed in the fifth century, and not to have been touched or altered since they were deserted, apparently in consequence of the Mahomedan irruption in the seventh century.

In the same province we find also the earliest examples of the use of *pier arches* in a church, to separate the nave from the aisles. These seem to have been currently used in Northern Syria in the sixth century, though not found in the West for several centuries afterwards.¹ Generally, three arches only were employed, and they consequently left the church so open and free that it is very questionable if in churches of limited dimensions the introduction of a much larger number by the Gothic architects was an improvement.

A considerable amount of perspective effect is obtained by throwing two transverse arches across the nave, dividing it into three compartments, each including four windows in the clerestory, and the whole design is simple and solid in a degree seldom surpassed in buildings of its class.

It is very interesting, however, to find that as early as the *sixth century* the Eastern architects were striving to represent principles of design which centuries afterwards enabled the Gothic architects to achieve their monumental triumphs! The introduction of four windows over each great arch and a roofing shaft between each, to support the beams of the roof, was a happy thought, and it is wonderful it was so completely lost sight of afterwards.

It is probable that the apse was originally adorned with paintings or mosaics, or at least that it was intended it should be so ornamented. But even as it is, the proportions are so well adapted to the size of the church and to its position, and it is so appropriately ornamented, that it is better than most of those found in Roman Basilicas, and, for a small church, is a more dignified receptacle for the altar than either the French *chevet* or the English *chancel*.

Did our limits admit of it, it would not only be pleasant

¹ Fergusson, Part ii., p. 298.

but instructive to dwell longer on this subject, for few parts of our enquiry can be more interesting than to find that as early as the sixth century the Roman Basilica had been converted into a Christian Church, complete in all its details, and, internally at least, in a style of architecture as consistent and almost as far removed from its classical prototype as the Mediæval Gothic itself.

Mr. Fergusson, who is our able guide through some portion of our researches, reiterates the observations previously made by us, that the Arabs availed themselves of Christian workmen and designs, without any scruples, for their Mosques, and that so long as the pillars and sculptured remains of ancient temples were found in abundance, they employed these with the same absence of all prejudice. In Spain, after the classic ruins had been exhausted, we find an original Spanish (not Syrian, not Egyptian) style arise.

Nor had the nomad tribes of Arabs, Saracens, or Turks (those tribes, in fact, who professed the religion of Mahomet, and cut their way into society with their sword and the Koran) any special style of architecture at first. They built their Mosques after the pattern of the Byzantine Basilicas they found in Asia Minor, and when they conquered Constantinople they copied the type of church peculiar to that city, of which, as we have remarked, St. Sophia is the crowning glory. After centuries had elapsed, it is true that from the Christian basis a peculiar style was fashioned for the Moslem houses of prayer; but originally the migratory hordes of warriors and herdsmen, who abhorred life in cities, had, as was natural, no architecture of their own.

The first Mosque known to have been erected by Christian workmen in Egypt is that of Amrou, built in the twenty-first year of the Hegira, A.D. 642. It was erected in old Cairo. Edrisi says it was originally a "Christian church," which was converted into a Mosque; the only part which can now be safely ascribed to the original date is a portion of the outer wall, built with pointed arches, similar to those of the Aksah at Jeru-

salem. It is at present in a sad state of dilapidation and decay.

Christian workmen were formerly asked for and sent by and to the friendly Sultans from Constantinople, as all historical evidence proves, and they aided in the erection of the precious Mosque of Cordova.

Thus we have seen the Christian style of architecture and that which afterwards took root and flourished in Europe, rise step by step in the East, and later become incorporated with the religious worship of Mahomet. We have now to trace its first steps in the Sicilian provinces, where, through a series of complex influences, the various features of the Byzantine-Saracenic, or more properly the *Sicilian style* of architecture came into birth.

The influence of Dorian Greece on Sicily was profound. The island was, in ancient times, profusely adorned with temples and edifices in the purest harmonies of the antique proportions and beauties. But little remained of the Carthaginian conquerors; the Romans followed, and left a few vestiges of architecture lately discovered; but the Byzantine element is preponderant in all the remains we have up to the eleventh century, when the Normans and ecclesiastics caused the introduction of Latinized forms in addition to the olden style. Sicily was favoured in being the seat of government of the warlike but highly intelligent Normans, who were distinguished from mere barbarous hordes by the avidity with which they sought to encourage the learning and the arts of the conquered. Many buildings of importance were erected at their command, partly by native workmen, aided by plans and decorative details offered by the Benedictines of Monte Cassino, who had been invited to afford their artistic aid. Frederick of Hohenstauffen, as we well remember, chose Palermo as his chief residence; so the city which had been embellished by the choicest Byzantine works, was equally favoured by the two dynasties that succeeded the Saracens. The central position of this lovely island and the incessant commercial intercourse it held with the countries to which it presents three fronts, caused the

revival of the arts to be splendid there, fostered by the enlightened taste of the Normans and lastly of Frederick II. We have no direct evidence of the exact form of the Byzantine churches of Sicily prior to the conquest of the island by the Saracens, as most of them were transformed into Mosques, but we know from the writings of Arabs that the architecture was so sumptuous as to call forth their warmest admiration.

Thus we find that whilst Northern and Central Italy were in a comparatively rude state, the gifted populations of Magna Græcia and Sicily carried on a successive series of triumphant achievements in art, unique even to this day, and even now hardly suspected by multitudes of educated and well-informed persons. The dangers and difficulties of travelling have partly contributed to this complete ignorance and wilful ill—faith in many authors, who, jealous of the prerogatives of their own cities, have aided the darkness which has hitherto shrouded the Southern Provinces; but we trust we have pointed out the vast field of research which will amply repay the investigator, and we feel convinced no one will rest satisfied he is master of the historical past of Italy until he has done his best to become acquainted with the relics of architecture, sculpture, frescoes, and mosaics of these provinces.

The able and invaluable guidance of Mr. Fergusson enables us to dwell with perfect confidence on the Sicilian architecture, as it is found standing in that island. "With the Norman sway and the pre-eminence of the Latin Church, a style arose, Greek in essence, Roman in form, and partially Saracenic in decoration. The square domed plans of the Greek Church have given place to the Roman basilica form, and to an arrangement adapted to the rites of the Roman Church, but all the work was performed by Greek artists; and the Roman outline was filled up and decorated to suit the taste and conciliate the feelings of the conquered Greeks or converted Moors. Their richer and happier fancy, more brilliant than that of the ruder races, was allowed full play. The Eastern exuberance in designing details and employing colours is

here displayed. There is nothing here indicative of Norman taste or feelings; their style had yet to be formed and its germs conveyed back from these provinces to their homes in Normandy."

The Normans naturally could bring no architectural or plastic arts to Sicily, though their ornaments for the person are beautiful and peculiar; but they were gifted with the next best talent after original genius—the taste to appreciate and to adopt and cultivate the works of others. They encouraged the building of palaces after the beautiful fashion of Sicily, and the Roman clergy directed the construction of churches suited to their rites; but they were built by Sicilians, after their own designs, and decorated as no others but they could decorate them, for there never had been a break in Sicilian art; the designs and the tools, and the technical skill in handling them, were all hereditary in the island. As in the older mother country, *polychromy* was universally employed, the same influences of a *brilliant nature* acting on a brilliant fancy caused the demand for *colour* to grow in the new, as it had grown in the old form of worship.

With regard to examples of the three styles blended in Sicilian architecture, it is much more difficult to adduce satisfactory specimens, for, as Mr. Fergusson aptly remarks, "No one surviving edifice can be pointed out in which they all blend in equal proportions. Each division of the island, in fact, retains a predilection for that style which characterised the majority of its inhabitants. Thus Messina and the northern coast as far as Cefalu remained Italian, in the main, and the churches there have only the smallest possible admixture of either Greek or Saracenic work. The old parts of the "Nunziatella," at Messina, might be found at Pisa, while the cathedral there, and that at Cefalu, would hardly be out of place in Apulia, except, indeed, that Cefalu displays a certain early predilection for pointed arches and something of Greek feeling in the decoration of the choir.

"In like manner, in Syracuse, and the southern angle of the island, the Greek feeling prevails almost to the

exclusion of the other two. In Palermo, on the other hand, and the western parts, the architecture is so strongly Saracenic that hardly any antiquary has yet been able to admit the possibility of such buildings as the *Cuba* and *Ziza* having been erected by the Norman kings. There is, however,¹ little or no doubt that the latter was built by William I. (1154-69), and the other about the same time, though by whom is not so clear."

Thus we find that fully a century after the Norman kings reigned in Sicily, native or Saracenic art still retained its full influence; a circumstance which need not surprise us when we reflect that the Normans were a governing but not an artistic or a cultivated people. A still more remarkable instance of the prevalence of Saracenic fashions is met with in the Church of San Giovanni "degli Eremiti," at Palermo.

Again, some further mention with reference to the origin of the pointed arch (so much debated) seems necessary here; and, following our usual custom, we shall, whenever it is possible, quote recognised authorities in confirmation of our own independent views.

We have mentioned the pointed arch as being still visible in the ruinous Mosque of Old Cairo, originally a Christian Church, and altered into a Mosque (in the year A.D. 642, the twenty-first of the Hegira) similar to the form of the arches of the Aksahr at Jerusalem.

"The pointed arch² was used in the Western World. Its traces appear in France at a much later period, but even at Vaison, in the south of France, it is met with as early as the tenth century as a vaulting construction. During the eleventh century it was currently used in the south, and as far north as Burgundy. In the twelfth it was boldly adopted in the north as a vaulting construction, and decorative feature, giving rise to the invention of a totally new style of architectural art.

"It is by no means impossible that the pointed arch

¹ The fact has been positively proved by Amari's reading and interpretation of the inscriptions thereon.

² Fergusson, p. 277.

was used by the Greek or Pelasgic colonists about Marseilles at a far earlier date, but this can only have been in arches or domes constructed horizontally. These may have suggested its use in radiating vaults, but can hardly be said to have influenced its adoption. Had it not been for the constructive advantages of pointed arches, the Roman circular arch would certainly have maintained its sway. It is possible, however, that the Northern Franks would never have adopted it so completely as they did, had they not become familiar with it either in Sicily or the East." When once they had so taken it up, they made it their own, by employing it only as a modification of the round arched forms previously introduced and perfected.

In Sicily the case is different; the pointed arch there never was either a vaulting or construction expedient. It was simply a mode of eking out, by its own taller form, and by stilting the limited height of the Roman pillars, which the Christians found so abundantly and used so freely. It is the same description of arch as that used in the construction of the Mosque El-Aksah, at Jerusalem, in the eighth century; "at Cairo,¹ in rebuilding that of Amrou, in the ninth century or the tenth, in the Azhar, and also, I believe, in the old mosque at Khairoan, which was the immediate stepping-stone by which it crossed to Sicily, till it became a settled canon of art, and a usual form of Moorish architecture. As such it was used currently in Sicily by the Moors; and in Palermo and elsewhere it became so essential a part of the architecture of the day that it was employed, as a matter of course, in the churches; but it was not introduced by the Normans, nor was it carried by them from Sicily to France. In fact, there is no connection, ethnographically or architecturally, between the Sicilian pointed arch and the French, and, beyond the accident of a broken centre, they having nothing in common."

We have thus been able to trace all the principal architectural features adopted by Europe, from their first

¹ Fergusson, p. 277.

rudimental appearance in the East, under Byzantine and mixed influences, to Sicily, and there we find them *blending* in marvels of a peculiar style, initiative, in Italy, of all that have followed since. In pursuing the same chain of inductive argument, supported by historical evidence, we shall find Sicily, and the southern states of Italy, to have in every instance given the direct inspiration to the architectural features of that which is styled the *Italian Gothic*; and first of all in the Cathedral of Pisa, erected in 1063, as an act of national *thanksgiving* after various victories gained. The particular occasion which immediately caused the Cathedral to be founded was the bursting of the chain of the harbour of Palermo, and the capture of six vessels laden with rich merchandise, which were triumphantly brought home to the banks of the Arno.

It was then unanimously agreed that the residue of the booty should be spent in the erection of a Cathedral which, both in size and in beauty, should surpass every other known. Buschetto, a Pisan, made the plan; the first stone was laid that same year; and the building was completed before the close of the century.

The happy admixture of style, blending harmoniously the highest elements and architectural features of the several styles then in use, whilst giving them a special character and novelty in the new fusion—the polychromic colouring of the marbles, and the delicate traceries and ornamentation—are evident reproductions of the Southern antecedent examples already named.

Like brethren of the same family, alike in beauty, and yet differing in some peculiar features, the Cathedrals of Lucca and Siena, Parma, Modena, Piacenza, Ferrara, and Cremona followed that of Pisa. Conventual buildings naturally followed, and, to the twelfth and thirteenth centuries we are indebted for the exquisite cloisters of San Zenone, at Verona, for those of San Giovanni Laterano, and San Paolo fuor “le Mura” at Rome, and for those of the monastery of Subiaco, with innumerable others of nearly equal beauty and extent.

CHAPTER XIV.

Æsthetic Sentiment and Culture as Developed in the Compositions of the Orthodox Greek Church, whence it was infused into the general culture.

HAVING touched on a few of the most prominent causes initiative of the development of Christian architectural art, we must point out our reasons for assigning to the indisputable impulse of the Greek Church and to the fertile imagination of its votaries, that series of beautiful sacred legendary compositions which in after ages served as examples for artistic cultivation; whilst they also formed the nucleus of the current language of the Universal Church.

The early Greek Fathers were animated by the deepest religious faith, and eagerly preached the sublimest moral truths; they were the patterns of the loftiest self-denial and of the warmest and purest charity; but as a body corporate they did not possess that ardour for proselytizing, nor that instinctive capacity for organisation peculiar, from all time, to the citizens of Rome. The spirit of the Orthodox Fathers was rather rapt, mystic, devotional, contemplative. To them we owe the engrafting of the Platonic theory of symbolism on the somewhat crude realism of the unadorned Gospel traditions, in themselves almost incomprehensible to the minds of those trained in a totally different sphere of thought and of argument.

It was to Leucius, a learned Greek, and a man of genius and taste, that the Christian world owes this significant and important blending of the wisdom of the ancients and of the exquisite charity and immortal teachings of the new religion. Leucius belonged to the Docetæ, a sub-sect of the Gnostics—that interesting and apparently imperishable sect, the tenets of which so largely influence some portions of the New Testament; and from the Docetæ arose the doctrines of the school termed the Alexandrian.

The Docetæ held that light and darkness, truth and error, spirit and matter are coequal, co-existent, and eternal, and continually at war, one with the other. Matter, or the tenement of the flesh, is essentially corrupt; but the soul is in principle pure and divine, the connecting link between the Deity and man; and a direct emanation from God—the life of all life—the glorified, the eternal.

The body, held to be thus the mere “earthly prison-house” of the soul, was to be mortified and subdued by the severest penances, to enable the soul to soar into the region of eternal light; a belief in the Christian doctrine of *atonement* was thus considered as unnecessary to salvation. Free will was a fundamental belief with them, and on this was based their urgent preaching of the necessity of all men seeking salvation, in virtue of this perfect “liberty,” to find it by prayer, austerities, and earnest purity of intention.

Marriage was considered as a necessarily inferior state of existence; it did not absolutely condemn to the exclusion of eternal peace, but it certainly debarred from the loftiest and purest relations of the ineffable beatitudes; these were reserved for such as practised the most entire celibacy.

The “Virgin,” whom all ages shall call blessed, was always such. The *appearance* of our Lord upon earth was a *divine phantasm*. Such was also the awful central Figure on Calvary; our Lord, soaring above this phantom appearance, reigned in glory with the Father above.

The pangs of death were, they believed, mitigated to the pure in soul, who instantly received the reward of the resurrection to all eternity, good and evil being alike annihilated by the visible Death.

As the Docetæ held, above all doctrines, that it is in the power of man by “faith and prayer” to elevate his earthly thoughts and feelings into a share of the unutterable mysteries of God, it followed necessarily that an un-earthly expression of abstract serenity and holy calm should distinguish all their artistic efforts, avowedly

painted with the desire of raising the minds of the worshippers to their own pure and ethereal heights. These doctrines and notions, more or less modified, were infused into the minds of the early Greek Fathers.

Hence the stamp of their inspiration has remained immortal; and from the lonely extremity of the Peninsula of Chalcedon, which is only joined to the mainland by a strip of soil half a mile wide, went forth that light which has ever since illumined the world, by a cycle of sublime and pathetic religious histories, indelibly associated with Christianity.

Mount Athos, the celebrated point of retreat of these ascetics and holy men in former times, may be sought for between the Gulfs of Contessa and the Monte Santo. It is of exceedingly difficult access; and the presence of anything female, even domestic birds or animals, is rigidly prohibited. The first monks retired hither from the unspeakable corruptions of the world of that period, the early centuries of our era. Their works, as found in the Churches still extant, bear, in outline and drapery, that classical elegance and dignity which could only be derived from an habitual acquaintance with the finest classical statues.

Taste and correctness of outline, warmed by intense religious thought, and, of course, guided by individual genius, which neither of the first-mentioned qualities can confer, produced by the hands of the monks of Mount Athos a series of paintings of such rare excellence as are hardly known even to the artistic world.¹

¹ M. Francois Sabatier, himself an amateur artist of distinction, visited the monasteries of the Levant, along with M. Papety, the well-known artist, in 1847. At that time an interesting account of this excursion, and M. Papety's valuable impressions on the subject, was published in the "*Révue des Deux Mondes*," 1st June, 1847, under the title of "*Peintures Byzantines, et les Couvens de l'Athos*"; and from this paper much valuable information may be drawn. Drawings made from the finest specimens of the series of mural paintings of the church of Aghia Lambra, of Mount Athos, were made by M. Papety, and were in the possession of M. F. Sabatier, resident at Florence, who, with the kindly liberality of a true hearted gentleman and the enthusiasm of a man of learning and acquirements, allows his friends to profit by the sight of these treasures.

The apocryphal Gospels, in which the bodily presence of Good and Evil Spirits figures largely, furnish many subjects for the paintings of that era. But the noblest and the best treat of the history of our Lord and of His blessed Mother. The composition is always pure, noble, dignified ; an unearthly calm reigns on these celestial features ; the eye is set somewhat deep ; the brows are classic, straight, and delicate ; the hair (parted, as becomes a Nazarene) is usually lighter than the swarthy Eastern type ; the draperies are admirable.

The school of Mount Athos during many ages was perpetually refreshed by monks retiring from the same world that still possessed the statues of Greece, and the taste of the purer schools. It was not until after the fall of Constantinople that painting degenerated into the soulless style of mere *copying* from received patterns into which it has now unhappily fallen.

St. Athanasius, and St. Peter surnamed the "Athonite," figure amongst the early inhabitants of this sacred spot, from which the eye can only rest on the majesty of nature, and in which a diet of herbs only is enforced. The church of Aghia Lambra, afterwards adorned by the very choicest paintings, was indeed founded by St. Athanasius at the commencement of the fourth century. It was wealthily endowed by the Emperor Nicephorus in the year 965. The doors of brass,¹ of marvellous workmanship, exactly resemble in style those of the Cathedral of Ravallo, near Amalfi, mentioned in a former chapter, and of several others of a like character to be met with in Apulia. The general plan of the church is like that of St. Mark, in Venice. This plan, entirely symbolical in design, is common to every church dedicated to the Greek ritual.

The "altar" is invariably a single one, screened by a profusion of carved and gilt ornament from pavement to roof, and cutting off the church in two parts.

The pulpits and other ecclesiastic furniture are of the choicest inlaying of wood it is possible to conceive ; but the greatest marvel of the church, as described by the

¹ Cuivre.

graphic pen of M. Papety, is the painting of the cupola : “ The entire space of the cupola is occupied by a colossal representation of Christ, wherein the same pure, august, calm type of features is recognised as was afterwards adopted by the best painters of the Renaissance, the flesh tints—‘ *couleur de blé*,’—or that mellow tint of complexion so peculiarly effective.

“ With one hand He points to the Gospel, which, with the other, He presses to His heart. His hair is auburn, but the eyebrows and beard are dark, adding force to the expression of gentleness of His half-closed eyes.

“ The Byzantines expressed their sense of Divine attributes by painting their sacred figures and those of higher importance in much larger proportions than others; thus the personages of the Heavenly Hierarchy close by our Saviour are much larger than those further off; and again, His head and bust (for the rest of the figure is omitted) tower above those close to Him.

“ Around Him, and crowning the cupola, the figures of Archangels are seen, robed in stoles of golden tissue, holding sceptres surmounted by the image of Jesus. These Archangels are painted as standing in graceful attitudes; the lustre of their rich brilliant robes comes out in fine relief from the dark monochrome background; the figures possess a grand, noble, majestic charm; above them a tribe of Cherubim surround the Saviour (who is placed in the centre of the whole). These emanations of the human fancy are painted with Heads only and two Small Wings of every imaginable tint.¹ Like gleams of a holy light, they seem to irradiate the azure vault, representative of heaven.

“ In the midst of these the figure of the Saviour rises on a pure gold ground, expanding, as it were, into immensity, and permeating the entire church, as He permeates creation with His love and light. Under this impression the eye meets the majestic figure of the

¹ It has been suggested, and with much semblance of reason, that the ascetics derived this idea from the small, brilliant, and varied clouds that hang on the sunsets.

Lord wherever it may turn, and the worshipper feels, as it were, under the direct observation of the vigilant eye of God.

"Beneath the cupola, at the sides,¹ are represented the four Evangelists, each writing under the dictation of an Apostle. The church is, in fact, entirely covered with paintings derived from both Testaments.

"Within the arms of the church are seen figures of saints emblematical of the Church Militant. The early patrons of the church are also seen there painted so as to front full the spectator, each standing apart. No attempt at grouping is to be observed; the figures stand alone, against a dark background. A similar distribution of figures is carried out through the entire group of churches in the monasteries of Mount Athos, now numbering about six thousand souls as inmates. The canons of art, having once been fixed, have been perpetually repeated ever since."

The Caloyers, or monks of Mount Athos, attribute these admirable compositions to the genius of a monk called "Emmanuel Panselinos," about whom there hangs a halo of legendary glory. His name, indeed, signifies "the moon at its full." The date is utterly lost, and can only be arrived at by a chain of inductive reasoning and searching comparison with other works of art correlative in drawing and expression to be seen elsewhere. Now it will be found that these compositions of Mount Athos somewhat resemble those we know to have been executed in the second century at Rome; there is a like analogy between them also and those of the Church of St. Paul "extra Muros," burnt down some years ago, and of St. John Lateran, designed in mosaic in the fourth century, during the triumph of Christianity.

Whilst faith was still pure and Christian feeling still sublime, Byzantine art reached its perfection. A comparison with later productions shows decided symptoms of decay as the impressions from the classical antique were more and more waning away.

¹ Les pendentifs.

We find that the mosaics of San Cosimo e Damiano, executed in the sixth century (or two hundred years later), are notably inferior to either of the above ; and still more inferior to these are the mosaics of Santa Francesca, 847, built under the pontificate of Leo IV., and of Santa Prassede, erected during the eleventh century. Then, again, the frescoes of Santa Maria in Trastevere, though precious as a record of historical costume, mark a complete and utter degradation of art.

Again, let us examine in some detail the remarkable mosaics in the church of San Vitale, in Ravenna, of the sixth century, executed by Byzantine artists after their own manner (an imitation of those of the highest style in Constantinople). We do not find in these the same austere calm correctness of the ages nearer the era of classic art, but they still shew a grandeur of conception and skill of execution in every way surprising. The plan of San Vitale approaches that of Santa Sophia at Constantinople. The execution of the details is of course inferior, as it is easy to suppose that the very best artists did not leave their own country. The style and beauty of the workmanship, the drawing of the figures and ornaments, correspond with the art sentiment expressed in the mosaics of Santa Prassede, of Santa Maria Cecilia in Trastevere, at Rome, and with those of the church of San Marco. The former date from the year 821, and the latter from 833.

Compared with the mosaics above referred to (such as they may still be observed in Italy), it must be affirmed by such as have observed the two, that the finest in conception, in design and character, are those executed in the earliest ages of Christianity, and these most closely approach the beautiful specimens to be seen in the church of Aghia Lambra on Mount Athos. Nor is this to be wondered at ; for, as we have remarked, the convents were perpetually filled by pious men fleeing from an evil world, but in which however the finest art still reigned supreme. To the perfection of earthly beauty the devout artist had but to add the humility which awed his own soul in

presence of God, and the virgin purity which he adored in the Blessed Mary, and his paintings became perfect. As we know from all historical records that a perpetual intercourse of artists was preserved between Italy and Greece, the wholly Byzantine nature of the early works is a matter of course. In these there is no attempt to render the gradations of tint of the human face; the flesh hues of hands and features are uniformly pale, and perhaps this one ascetic tint adds to the illusion of almost supernatural beings. The colour of ripe wheat was the favourite tint given to the complexion; this beautiful colourless pallor may be to this day observed in the handsomest specimens of Arminians or Greeks. But after the Iconoclastic sect had made havoc with the fine paintings, we find sullen, harsh, and dark hues introduced and pervading in art, as if mankind had sought to make its gods share its own evil and ephemeral passions. But the real object of this change was to avoid even the semblance of "humanity," and to remove the *Image* still farther from the common range of sympathy (and of concupiscence from the eye and mind).

We may therefore be perfectly sure that the wonderful paintings of Aghia Lambra date from the earliest ages of Christianity, for they correspond in treatment to the performances of the finest masters of the Renaissance, and at the same time the costumes in their most minute details agree with those of the Court of Imperial Byzantine Paleologi and Comneni. To the purity of the climate, the poverty of the monks, and their almost inaccessible resort, we owe the preservation of these priceless relics, the very existence of which is almost unknown.

The first revelation of their transcendent beauty was made public in 1845 by the French savant, Didron, who, in a tour to Mount Athos, was struck, not only by the works themselves, but by the unvarying copies of them he met with elsewhere. He then learned that traditional art was handed down immutably in a "Handbook of Painting," which served as "a guide to Iconographic Art."

M. Didron succeeded in obtaining a copy of this most curious Greek manuscript. It was published in 1845, in French, under the following title: "*Manuel d'Iconographie Chrétienne Grecque et Latine, avec une Introduction par M. Didron. Traduit du Manuscrit Byzantin 'le Guide de la Peinture,' par le Docteur Durand. 1845.*" The original guide-book is by the painter Dionysius de Fournà d'Agapha. The great works of the school are attributed to its celebrated founder, Emmanuel Panselinos of Thessalonica, the "angel" of the art.

Like Homer and Dante, he seems to have aimed at embracing the universe in his art, elevating into celestial beauty all who are filled with divine love, and portraying as foul and repulsive all in whom it is not.

The glories of colour, the charms of radiance and beauty, are lavished on the Holy, whilst the Angel of Sin is seen progressively losing every human attraction, and finally, transformed into a hideous reprobate, is falling into the gulf of perdition with despair and anguish on his face. It is to be observed, however, that the taste of the artist spares us from the grotesque additions of the hoofs and horns of the semi-comic Dæmon of the Middle Ages, and the moral evil depicted on his ruined face is infinitely more impressive than the above childish and fantastical additions to the human form.

The guide-book opens with a noble dedication to the Holy Virgin, and a recommendation to prayer and to virtuous and holy thoughts before the undertaking of sacred subjects. It is then divided into three parts. In the first part the painter is instructed in all the minutiae of detail for drawing the outline from the original painting he is to copy. He is taught every particular of painting in fresco, of compounding colours, of mixing them, and all the technicalities of their use. The second part contains precise rules of how pictures are to be composed, and a series of subjects are given from the "*Marvels of the Old and New Testaments.*" The painter is told how the Heavenly Dynasties are to be arranged, with attention to their laws of precedence—

choirs of angels, thrones, cherubim, seraphim, the Tetramorphic figure (composed of the four attributes of the four Evangelists): this figure is to present the Angel for St. Matthew; the Lion for St. Mark; the Ox for St. Luke, and the Eagle for St. John. These four symbolical heads, springing from a human trunk, were to be taken as a type of the "harmony" of the Gospels emanating from the body of our Saviour (as in the vision of Ezekiel). After these superior orders follow the secondary ones, or celestial powers of government—dominations, virtues, potentates. The third order are the principalities of heaven—archangels, and angels of darkness and of light.

The descriptions of the modes of treatment of the first, or most difficult and sublime order of subjects, is very interesting and beautiful; and important, so far as that it has been heretofore uniformly followed ever since, and marks a rule from which no departure is suffered in the Greek Church.

Our limits only permit us to give the details of one subject, that of the Fall of Lucifer, as a sample of the lofty manner in which even the darker shadows were conceived. In the higher compartment of the picture, representative of the glorious Heavens, Christ is seated on a throne, holding the Gospels, which are to be opened at this passage, "I have seen Satan fall with the rapidity of lightning." "Around Christ are choirs of angels on whose countenance the sentiment of awe is to be discerned. In their midst is seen the Archangel Michael; an inscription near at hand bears the words, 'Let our bearing mark the fear of the Lord. Let us adore the majesty of God.' Beneath them mountains are seen swelling upwards; a deep chasm on their summit is to be inscribed with 'Tartarus.'

"Lucifer and his army, meanwhile, fall from the Heavens, and are precipitated into the Abyss. During the fall, the change from the light of beauty to the darkness of future deformity is to be represented. Whilst in the act of falling, the countenances of the angels

nearest to the heavens are still to be painted as beautiful ; a shadow is to darken those that are lower down, and this shadow is to deepen as the host recedes from the abode of Light and Truth. Still lower, they become partly transformed into dæmons, though vestiges of their angelic nature remain to them yet. Finally, they become black and hideous. Lowest of all, at the mouth of the Abyss, is the prostrate and awful figure of Lucifer, with his face upturned towards the Heavens, as if deploring the loss of that blessed abode he had forfeited for ever."

It is impossible not to be struck by the æsthetic and moral philosophy of this "recipe" for the painting of such a subject. We have transcribed it also as a specimen of purity in taste, free from all admixture of the grotesque. Indeed, the realistic and grotesque element was added to the representations of Hell by the Etruscan, Latin, and Italian artificers and poets ; not a trace of it is to be found in the hagiographers of the Eastern Church.

With much regret, in which we feel our readers will fully share, we must abstain, for want of room, from giving further detailed extracts from the instructions for the composition of pictures. All are, however, marked by that exquisite elevation of sentiment, blended with the most persuasive appeals in behalf of Christian teaching and Christian virtues, which realises our conception of religious art in its purest form. We shall later copy the headings of the subjects to shew their comprehensive variety. The whole series of stories in the Old Testament is to begin with the creation of Adam and the naming of the animals, extending to the creation of Eve and the expulsion from Paradise ; each incident being clearly and graphically detailed. The rest of the stories of the Old Testament succeed one another in the same way, and exactly after the manner in which we see them treated by the old Italian masters, who all followed the traditions of the Levant throughout the Southern Provinces, Siena, Umbria, and Rome. To these we owe the incredible number of church paintings, many worthless,

save as curiosities, which resulted from servile copying of mere patterns by inferior workmen, until the Florentine school arose to a new style in the person of Giotto, and he breathed literally on the "dry bones" of the past the breath of genius, awakening the sentiment and beauty of religion in forms not alien from human sympathies, and therefore of human comprehension. This immortal school progressed till it culminated in *Rafaelle da Urbino*; in those paintings he has left of his best epoch, before his taste became modified by the prevailing passion of the day in Rome—a desire to copy *Michael Angelo* and the heroic style.

The "Guide to Painting" observes a like detailed catalogue of every minutest incident of the New Testament, more especially of the life of our Lord.

In demonstration of the direct analogy and derivation existing between the traditions and precepts of the Byzantine and Italian schools, there is a large picture by *Duccio "di Buoninsegni,"* of *Siena*, in the *Duomo* of that city. It is painted in two halves, and divided into compartments. This picture was hailed as a marvel at *Siena* when first painted, and may still be admired for the minute finish of the figures.¹ The impassioned beauty of the sentiment, and the appropriate conception and composition of the compartments, descriptive of the passion, crucifixion, descent from the cross, &c., may give a good idea of the Byzantine narrative style. Its hue is dark, like all the later Byzantine pictures, but the expression of the figures is divine; indeed, the early school of *Siena* in spiritualised types of contemplative grace is far superior to any other in Italy, though it is by far the least known.

But to return to our "Guide to Painting." The sages of antiquity in whose works the advent of Christ is supposed to be prophesied or alluded to, and who are thus held to have been favoured by revelation, (or, as they would term it, the "Essence of God" in writing) are

¹ It is placed on the lower tier of the wall on the right hand side of the altar on entering the church from the front door.

numbered and described (besides the Hebrew prophets of course) as they are to be painted. Plutarch, Plato, Photius are to be represented "with venerable white beards" in order to inspire respect.

The parables also are all noted in the recipe for painting; also the Last Supper; the second appearance of our Lord; the Last Judgment.

We likewise remark all the incidents in the spurious editions of the lives of the Virgin Mary, the same incidents as have been accepted, and are marked, in the Latin Church as festivals; the Conception, or Annunciation; the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin; the Mother of God blessed by the Priests; the Presentation; Joseph conducting Mary to the presence of the Holy of Holies; the Death of Mary; the Entombment; the Assumption; the Fountain of Life; the Prophets; the Salutations; the Twenty-four Stations made by Mary Mother. Various other subjects are all treated as we have been accustomed to see them in the Italian schools:—

The twelve Apostles (types and characters carefully described); the Four Evangelists; the Seventy Apostolic Saints; the Holy Bishops, their types and epigraphs; the Deacons; the Holy Martyrs; the Ten Cretan Martyrs; the Maccabees; the Seven Children of Ephesus; Cenobites, their characteristics and appropriate epigraphs; the Stylites; Poets, Sages, Just Men; the Holy Myrrhophores; the Female Martyrs; single Female Martyrs; the Exaltation of the Cross; the Seven Holy Œcumenical Councils; the Exaltation of the Holy Images; Miracles of the Archangel Michael; Miracles of Saint John; Miracles of Saint Peter; Miracles of the Apostle Paul; Miracles of Saint Nicholas; Miracles of Saint George; Miracles of Saint Catherine; Miracles of Saint Anthony; Allegories, and Moralities. Description of the life of a truly holy Monk; the Ladder of Life and the Road to Heaven; the Death of the Hypocrite; the Death of the Just Man; the Death of the Sinner; how the fleeting vanities of life are to be represented.

The third part of the "Guide to Painting" treats of the distribution of subjects, and of their appropriate places inside churches.

There is a most interesting appendix, in which the manner in which the early painters received their inspiration for painting the Holy Images is described, and a beautiful dissertation on the characteristics of the countenances of Our Lord and His Mother is given, along with detailed instructions as to their faces and figures, directions for imparting blessings, and for writing inscriptions relative to the Holy Trinity.

This interesting and important volume closes with a note preceding the description of the images of the Saviour and His Virgin Mother, in which the aim of Iconography or painting of images is distinctly pointed out.

"We honour images of holy, venerable, and saintly personages, inasmuch as, with their personal semblance, they bring before us the remembrance of their qualities and virtues which we admire.

"We do not, *for its own sake*, honour the art of painting or design, which is subservient to the rendering of the image such as we may suppose the good and holy to have possessed whilst upon earth. Thus we endeavour to trace some of their qualities in the delineation of the Saviour and of the blessed Virgin, and again of other Saints, Martyrs, and holy men, in order that by such ennobling thoughts we may ourselves be elevated to virtue, and encouraged in the performance of good deeds. It is well, consequently, to represent Holy Images, and to bestow on them all due honour. Anathema, therefore, against all blasphemers and calumniators."

This characteristic termination to the above sensible declaration is evidently made against those who termed Iconography an idolatrous practice, and asserted that images were "adored" whilst they were only "revered."

As many readers will be deeply interested in knowing the descriptions prescribed in this guide for the painting of images of our Lord and of the Blessed Virgin, we transcribe the accounts of both.

“Image of the Lord Jesus.—The Human yet Divine person of our Lord is three cubits in height. Sweetness and repose are the characteristic traits in His countenance. The eye is fine, the eyebrows meet together; the brow is arched; the nose regular; the complexion the hue of *ripe wheat*. The gold-streaked hair is slightly curled and wavy; the beard is black. The fingers of His pure hands are long and tapered and of well-proportioned form. The character of His countenance is simple, like that of the parent Mother from whom he drew His human form.”

“On the outward characteristics of the Mother of God.—The Holy Virgin is to be depicted as of middle age; some assert her stature to have been of three cubits. Her complexion of the colour of ripe corn, her hair and eyes of hazel hue. She had a moderately sized nose and long tapered fingers. Her apparel, though of fine material, is to be humble, yet beautiful and faultless, like herself. Garments of a simple colour are to be preferred, according to the fashion of those which she really wore, (one garment being still preserved in the temple dedicated to her name).”

These delineations indicate a beautiful simplicity and delicacy of taste which are very striking.

In Rome the Saviour is represented in the early ages as the Genius of Christianity, a beautiful youthful figure, but devoid of any peculiar type. The original Byzantine model did not reach Rome until the fourth century, when it was introduced by Constantia, sister of the Emperor Constantine; it had been sent to her by Eusebius, Bishop of Cesarea, to whom she had written to request it. It was at once adopted by the Latin Church, and has descended thus to the present day, with the exception of the beard no longer being painted black, and only being darker than the hair.

The earliest appearance of the Byzantine ideal of our Lord occurs in Rome in a mosaic of the fourth century, in the cemetery of San Calisto; it is preserved in the Museum Christianum of the Vatican; it was repeated in

441 on the triumphal arch of fuori dei San Paolo Muri (destroyed, as many remember, by fire not long ago).

In this representation, our Saviour is attended on the right and left by the symbols of the Evangelists and the elders offering their crowns, and repeated invariably in the same attitude, generally in the act of benediction with the right hand, whilst He holds the cross on the globe in his left. In all the Basilicas built at Rome and throughout Italy we find the same figure.

From this conventional type may possibly have been derived the description of our Lord in a spurious composition of the latter ages, termed an epistle from the Proconsul Publius Lentulus to the Roman senate, in which it is stated: "There appeared a man of great virtue in these our days, named Jesus Christ, who is yet living amongst us, and of the Gentiles is accepted for a prophet of truth; but his own disciples call him the Son of God. He raiseth the dead, and cureth all manner of diseases. A man of a stature somewhat tall and comely, with a countenance inspiring reverence, such as beholders may both love and fear. His hair, the colour of a filbert, full ripe, reaching down to his ears, whence lower it is more orient in hue, somewhat curling and waving about his shoulders. In the midst of his head is a seam or partition of the hair, after the manner of the Nazarites; his forehead is smooth and delicate; his face without spot or wrinkle, beautiful, with a comely red. His nose and mouth exactly formed; his beard thick, the colour of his hair, not of any great length, but forked. His look innocent, his eyes grey, clear, and quick. In reproving awful, in admonishing courteous; in speaking, very modest and wise; in proportions of his body, well shaped. None have ever seen him laugh, but many have seen him weep. A man for his beauty surpassing the children of men." It will be remarked that there are trifling variations from the Byzantine "Guide to Painting" in the above remarkable document, but the delineations of the person of our Lord evidently are drawn from the same source. The spurious epistle of Publius Lentulus is very well known,

as also a description, equally spurious, but yet of immense antiquity, of the Blessed Virgin in the Mazarine Library in Ireland. But the existence of the authentic and invaluable Byzantine Manual is hardly suspected even by well-informed persons.

It has been our endeavour to lay before the reader the most accurate information and the most ample testimony of the existence of a school of Byzantine art of the loftiest Christian excellence, combined with fine classical design and a technical skill rarely surpassed in the effects of colour as a decorative medium. That school has hitherto been too readily prejudged and condemned by those who have merely observed the debased repetitions (at the hands of unintelligent copyists) of types themselves the hundredth inferior copies of originals long forgotten, and themselves unknown. As well might the artists previous to Raffaele be judged if only seen through the medium of the quaint modern caricatures exhibited as the "Pre-Raffaellite School," where the height of devotion and purity is supposed to be embodied by long lean figures, like dressed worms, with heads often jointed awry on the spine.

Not only were the compositions of the early Byzantine school noble and beautiful, but the adherence to truth in beauty was very great and elemental. In further illustration of this we shall borrow from the learned M. Didron his account of an emblematic painting on a subject often repeated in the East, and drawn from the seventeenth chapter of the Apocalypse—"Babylon, the Mother of the Abominations of the Earth."

"Babylon is a young and handsome woman, seated on the Seven-headed Beast, with the cup of abominations in her hand, offering the wine of idolatry to the kings and the great of the earth." Babylon is there delineated as a very handsome young woman, gorgeously attired in the most sumptuous raiment, with the bosom boldly unveiled, and covered only from the waist downwards. But at some of the monasteries of Mount Athos—at Coutloumoussi, for example,

near Karès—the figure of Babylon painted on the wall of the porch in front of the church has been cruelly mutilated, and the bust has been effaced by the wrathful fingers of the monks, who thus destroyed the “weapons” of the “brazen lady,” and rendered her charms so problematic as to annul the force of the moral intended to be inculcated.¹

¹ M. Didron, in absence of dates, infers, from the excellence of the artistic representations he met with on Mount Athos and in the Greek monasteries, that such skill must probably have been the result of the impulse given to the delineations of Christian art by the Renaissance. We have endeavoured to give proof, on historic ground, of the futility of this argument. Our own theory is being confirmed by the discovery of new affirmative proofs.

CHAPTER XV.

Art in the Southern Provinces.—Naples, Capua, Amalfi, &c. Revival of Art in Tuscany, Nicola, Pisano, and Giotto.

THE best mode of illustrating the correctness of our induction relatively to the continuity in Italy of the great traditional School of Art, as represented by the works even now extant in the Southern Provinces, will be to draw the attention of the reader to such specimens of hieratical art as are still to be observed in Naples and its more or less immediate neighbourhood, thus affording to the traveller greater convenience in seeking out for himself the monuments detailed.

Circumstances have of late years unexpectedly favoured this interesting field of observation by revealing, when the convents and nunneries were opened (on the secularization of Church property in 1864), new regions for research. Since that period the study of monuments hitherto unknown, disregarded, or inaccessible, has revealed treasures of art unsuspected before. Evidence is obtained that the national and traditional schools of art were simultaneously cultivated from the earliest times of the Christian era.

Amongst the most interesting relics of a period heretofore unknown may be classed the church and cloister of Donna Regina at Naples, built, according to historical evidence, about the eighth century.

Even after withstanding the shocks of earthquakes and the consecutive transformations which metamorphosed it from a convent of Greek nuns of the order of St. Basil into a Benedictine and a Franciscan nunnery, still the earliest paintings bear the hieratical impress of the Orthodox Greek Church in the robes of the clergy, the monks, the nuns, and retain many of the peculiar symbols of the Greek dogma.

The richness and variety of the costumes and the novelty of the discovery are all highly interesting in an historical and archæological point of view. A certain technical skill characterises these early paintings; a liveliness of composition, and a freedom and variety of expression, with a vivacity of colouring, going far to prove the existence of a school of art derived from Byzantium, but governed by fixed laws. About the beginning of the eighth century, too, the worship of images, it will be remembered, was restored by the beautiful but bad Empress Irene. Naples was at that time divided into six parochial districts, under the supremacy of the Patriarch of Constantinople. The number of Greek monasteries seems to have been considerable; the most ancient recorded are Santa Patrizia, San Gregorio-Armeno, Santa Gaudiosa; and after these we find St. Marcellino, St. Archangelo a Baiano, Donna Romita, (Domina Aromatium), Donna Albina, and Donna Regina.

Though the exact date of the paintings in Donna Regina is unknown, yet, as the earliest courses must have been executed whilst the Greek ritual flourished, they must date between the eighth century and the year 1053, when Roger introduced the Latin faith. This curious old building, which bears the traces of many injuries from earthquakes and revolutions, was formerly a favourite sanctuary and retreat for royal and noble ladies, and maidens of high birth in the days of Frederick II.; it was also protected by Charles of Anjou. A letter of his to the peace officers, or Giustizieri, of the Terra di Lavoro and Molise is still extant, in which he bids them protect the sisters, then Franciscans, of Donna Regina, travelling on their journey of quest in the provinces around.

Owing to this high patronage, the interior of Donna Regina was kept in perpetual and careful repair; it was exquisitely decorated and entirely painted from roof to pavement by the best artists. The ancient original building consisted of an upper and a lower church; the former terminated at a certain distance from the latter,

keeping clear of the altar, which was situated in the lower church, and served for both. The nuns attended divine service behind the grate of the upper church; the mixed congregation filled the lower, which was opened at fixed periods. The hall or ante-room leading to the upper church, as well as the whole roof, walls, cornices and corners of the latter, are storied over with antique paintings, interesting from a certain peculiarity of treatment, of which we shall select a few examples.¹

We have the dark monochrome background of the churches of Mount Athos. On this the figures of a gigantic bishop in Greek vestments and of St. Christopher bearing the infant Jesus on his shoulder are seen; here also we have a "Presentation of the Virgin," doubly interesting as affording a sight of the source of the inspiration of Titian, and because it literally carries out the directions in the "rubric" of the "Iconographical Manual," as follows:—

"The temple is seen from the exterior. At the top of the staircase the figure of the prophet Zacharias appears standing in his sacerdotal robes; he stands with extended arms in the porch, awaiting the infant Virgin (aged three years), who meantime ascends the steps alone, holding a lighted taper in one hand, whilst the other is held upraised. Joachim and Anna, who remain behind, point rejoicingly towards their child."

At Donna Regina there are two high priests instead of Zacharias only. In the great painting of Titian the *variantes* and amplifications, all most probable and natural, will be remembered. The infant Virgin ascends alone; this was the germ of inspiration²; but Titian has managed with consummate artistical skill the episodes and incidents in the crowd which have made his painting so celebrated.

To return to Donna Regina. On the lunette over the

¹ The very first publication which alludes to these paintings is only of the year 1864! A pamphlet by M. Settembrini appeared at Naples on the subject in that year.

² See also Gaddo Gaddi, Santa Croce, Florence.

doorway leading into the upper church is seen the traditional composition of the Annunciation in two compartments ; on the one side the meek figure of the Virgin is seen reading from an open book, whilst the angel, kneeling in her presence, delivers his message of heavenly love.

Amongst other curious characteristics of the Greek form of worship we have here the representation of the Holy Trinity : *Three middle-aged Personages, all exactly alike, as Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, "coequal and co-eternal."*

Those who recollect the wild and furious theological disputes on the mystical origin of the Holy Ghost will smile at the *naïveté* of this painted protest against any difference in the Divine Substance of the Three. The interior of the upper church forms a vast picture gallery, stored with primitive legendary lore. Heaven and Hell are represented by Divine personages and by *dæmons* ; but there is no trace of the intermediate state of purgatory, which was the lucrative creation of mediæval divinity.

Flanking the two pointed windows, and filling the middle space between them, are seen three curious compositions, which occupy the entire compartments—"Heaven," "The Last Judgment," and "Hell." The Twelve Apostles mark by their presence the abode of the Blessed ; their heads are surrounded by the gold nimbus, and each holds an open book in his hands. Beneath them are seen crowds of the dignitaries of the Church, also holy men and doctors of canon law ; there are likewise martyrs, anchorites, saintly maidens, and young children, who are led to the Temple of Bliss by Angel forms.

Within this temple is observed the Holy Trinity, typified, as we have noted, by three men of mature age, all precisely similar. The mystic palm outstretches its three-branched stem over all. In the centre compartment we see the figure of our Lord ; Moses on one side, and Elias on the other side, kneel in prayer to Him.

Beneath them is a Cross, at the foot of which numberless small figures are seen in prayer. Opposite to them stand four figures, probably intended for the Evangelists, holding scrolls and a drawn sword ; hard by an angel can be discerned, and four other figures (probably the four theological virtues). Several angels, trumpet in hand, are sounding the call to the Last Judgment ; recumbent figures arise from earth, and are borne off by angels to the Throne of Love. The base of the composition is adorned by eight portrait busts of saints, with a Greek Bishop in the centre. Beneath all is seen a colossal figure of St. Paul, grasping a Damascus sword, and holding a book in his left hand.

In the third compartment, assigned to " Hell," the Twelve Apostles are again seen, seated in deliberation. By their side stands an Angel, who launches off the condemned sinners into the abyss of flame. These are hurled off, swathed in their shrouds, with a written scroll in their hands, and are caught as they fall by Devils with hooks. The chief crime thus punished seems to have been heresy.

The above are not by any means the most beautiful or attractive of the compositions ; they have been selected chiefly from their dogmatic significance. Amongst many paintings half obliterated by time, there are several remarkable for strength of tone, vivacity of composition, and a genial sentiment of life.

Of paintings derived from subjects taken from the Old and New Testaments, perhaps the most remarkable are those descriptive of the " Passion of our Lord," " the Crucifixion," and " the Resurrection "—all evidently painted after the rules of Byzantine art.

In " the Crucifixion," our Lord is seen suffering between the two malefactors ; the three Maries and the Apostles stand below, in a mournful group. A centurion on horseback stands at one side ; on the other, soldiers play at dice with callous indifference. But the " Deposition " is, perhaps, the finest of all the paintings ; it is full of life, variety, vigour, and shows a high sentiment

of art and of pathos, besides knowledge of drawing and foreshortening.

The "Resurrection" shows us the "white-robed angel" seated on the empty tombstone (the "*Egli è sorto, non è qui*" of Manzoni). Further on we see Jesus appearing to Mary Magdalen, and again to the disciples on the road to Emmaus. The scriptural texts are inscribed below every incident, but in all instances in Western letters, never in Greek. The flesh tints are uniformly of a brownish red, and the variety and force of expression in the features and attitudes are very remarkable.

To the native school of art, again, belong the series of paintings descriptive apparently of the life of Donna Regina, the foundress of the convent. These are full of naturalistic details, and of the freedom and spontaneity of life in Southern Italy, though somewhat defective in outline.

We first behold a Byzantine monastery; a Monk is seen looking out of the window; then a bridal procession in a church. We may assume the bride and bridegroom to be prince and princess, from the royal insignia worn by their parents. A monk, or "caloyer" of the Greek ritual, gives the benediction; the courtiers and the flute players wear conical caps, in the Persian style. No musical instruments whatever were allowed inside the Greek "Orthodox churches," most likely from the unhallowed association of music with the pagan rites; but flute-players of both sexes were an invariable part of festive pageants of early times, and probably in Italy the custom was kept up.

The Bride's costume is in harmony with what we know of the dress and ornaments of that day. We afterwards see her leave her home, pass through many vicissitudes, and finally take the veil. We then see her following the most humble pursuits. She is favoured with a "vision of our Lord." She dies, and we see her burial, probably in the very convent she founded.

All these stories display the costumes, manners, cus-

toms, and beliefs of the day. All are purely Byzantine in character. This convent has been much altered and repaired; the Atrium is full of fragments of antique columns and colonettes; striking paintings by Marco Marte, an artist of the early Neapolitan school, adorn the altar-pieces; but the great interest of the place is undoubtedly centred on the ancient series of Byzantine paintings we have faintly indicated.

The Church and Monastery of St. Angelo in Formis, near Capua, attracted the attention of an eminent artist,¹ and later of an enthusiastic archæological student, the Chevalier Salazaro. The subject was followed up, and led to the discovery of a series of rare and interesting compositions within the interior of the church and building; those of the Porch and Doorway were already known, and formed the subject of an instructive memoir by the Chevalier Salazaro, already mentioned as a friend of art.²

These frescoes, of which an historical notice will be traced, are of the eleventh century. The Byzantine influence is still predominant in the rendering of the Biblical subjects; but an exceedingly rapid development in art is noticeable in the compositions, which are evidently merely historical. The design is very defective; but the figures are full of life and variety. The costumes are glowing in colour, and there is a naturalistic animation over the whole which makes them lifelike, and conveying the impression of truthfulness in quite a singular degree.

The compositions, painted after the prescribed hierarchical rules, are grand in sentiment and arrangement. The costumes are those of the Imperial Eastern Court; but the other figures (besides those of *divine* and *angelic* nature, so respectfully robed according to Byzantine Court fashions) are attired in dress known as *Lombard*; and the Bishops and clergy of the Latin

¹ Domenico Morelli, the master spirit of the present school of modern Neapolitan painters.

² "Affreschi de S. Angelo in Formis. Descritti per Demetrio Salazaro, Ispettore della R. Pinacoteca Nazionale di Napoli, 1868."

Church wear their own vestments. Though the Benedictines were settled in Capua as early as 720, they never could, it appears, obtain possession of St. Angelo in Formis until the year 1072, when it was made over to them by a bull of Gregory VII. and the influence of Richard the Norman.

Desiderius, who was Abbot of Monte Cassino and Propost of St. Angelo in Formis, succeeded to the Papal throne 24th May, 1086. He never ceased to foster and enrich the latter Basilica, and it was enlarged, beautified, and completed by his care. We find (in Cro. Cassi., lib. 3, chap. 29) that "during the construction of the Basilica of St. Angelo in Formis, the Abbot Desiderius caused several able artificers or 'Quadratari' to come over from Constantinople for the purpose of founding a school of 'Mosaicisti' to aid in the decoration and embellishment of the church and abbey of Monte Cassino."

This artistic school is the first to which a positive date can be assigned; and from thence are to be traced serially the beautiful works, pictures, frescoes, decorations, &c., which were executed during the time referred to by the new Pope. There is also historical evidence to prove that the Sicilian school of art which attained so much perfection under the Norman and Swabian rulers was derived from the same source.

The great Benedictine school of Monte Cassino furnished indeed artists and designs to Western Europe; for, from the heights of that holy hill, civil arts as well as religious truth beamed softly and brightly through the darkest ages.

Description of St. Angelo in Formis.—The church of St. Angelo in Formis is an excellent example of the transformation so often effected both by Christian and Saracen architects of Greek or Roman-Greek edifices into Sanctuaries dedicated to the worship of Mahomet or to Christian uses. Its present character is mixed Byzantine. Columns of various shape and colour taken from the ancient temple give it a rich ornamental appearance. The basement of the bell-tower is of ancient

travertine ; the tower itself is Byzantine in character, so likewise are the cornices which adorn the building, and the exquisitely tasteful windows.

The interior of the church has three naves, divided by fourteen columns of "Cipollino" and "Paonazzo," isolated beneath circular arches and surmounted by capitals, which, like the basement, must have belonged to the ancient Temple of Diana of Capua. By the apse is seen the marble pulpit, which is sculptured and decorated in mosaic after the Byzantine style. It stands on four marble columns, each resting on a lion. The fonts for holy water are fragments of the antique edifice. The ancient mosaic pavement is also preserved ; it was restored when the transformation from paganism to Christianity took place.

Frescoes in St. Angelo in Formis.—Over the principal doorway before entering the church the figure of the Angel Gabriel is seen, holding a sort of elongated sceptre in his right hand ; the other hand holds a globe, from which an inscription in Greek letters has been erased.¹

In an oval over the arch of the door the figure of the Virgin is seen standing between two angels. The dress and crown of the Virgin are Byzantine ; the face is delicately painted and full of majestic grace, without affectation or straining after effect.

Within the church, and fronting the high altar, is a painting of the "Last Judgment," divided into seven rectangular divisions or zones. Christ, as the Supreme Judge, appears in an oval compartment. He is seated on a gold throne, on which lilies are plentifully strewn. A sort of general irradiation pervades the whole figure. The arms are outstretched, and slightly bent downwards towards the sides ; with the right hand He seems to announce to the blessed the award of their future bliss ; with the left He seems to banish the reprobate from His

¹ An inscription in the Lombard character runs thus :—"Coscendes cœlum si te cognoveris ipsum, ut Desiderius, qui, sacro flamine plenus, complendo legem, Deitati condidit adem, ut capiat fructum qui finem nesciat ullum."

presence. Above all, in the window compartments, four angels are seen sounding the trumpet of the resurrection and calling the quick and the dead. Thus the colossal figure of the Saviour, with the "gloria" or radiation cast by His presence, includes the whole space divided literally into several compartments, in the upper tier of which are seen angels and archangels robed in the brightest colours and most sumptuous attire, who stand in reverential attitudes in the presence of the Lord, to whom the nearest shows an apple—type of the original sin of man. Beneath these are seated the twelve apostles; six on the right and six on the left of the Redeemer; they wear the Roman dress. The drawing is tolerably correct, and the attitudes and expression appropriate. Two compartments, one above the other, are assigned to the just; in the upper one, devoted to the holy kings and emperors and great men of earth who are to be saved, popes, bishops, prelates, and sovereigns can be recognised. They are all splendidly attired in the costumes of the period. On the corresponding upper tier of the other side are seen other figures in the dress of the Lombards, but more simply attired. Two symbolical palm trees rise at the end of each picture, and each blissful soul culls a branch as the reward of virtue. Much uniformity is noticed here in attitude and expression. The blissful are placed on the right hand of the Saviour. On the left are seen the punishments of the guilty. The upper tier of the compartment represents a chain of gloomy mountains,¹ rent by chasms, from whence torrents of fire come zigzagging over the wicked; the latter turn despairingly to obtain a last glimpse of the Lord before they are precipitated into the abyss. Kings, priests, and friars of the Benedictine order are seen among the condemned.

Within the lowest compartment a chained figure of gigantic mould, but with human form and features, is seated upon the piled bodies of the lost. This is the Satan of Scripture, called "Judas" in the inscription

¹ This will recall to the reader's mind the description of the like scene in the Hagiographic Guide Book of Art.

close at hand. Other dæmons are pictured as Satyrs. One leads two women, who are unclothed, towards the burning flames. Others are flung from above into the eternal gulf of torment.

This part of the painting is indifferent, and evidently by a coarser mind and ruder hand than portrayed the lovely angels, who at the verge of Hell seem to push the reprobate in with their lances.¹

To the legends of Heaven and Hell those of Purgatory were afterwards added by the Latin Church, and during the Dark and Middle Ages these formed the chief aliment for devotion, meditation, and one may say "amusement" of all classes. The legends were naturally coloured by the mental progress and beliefs of each succeeding century, and their analytic synthesis was first given to poetry, based on records of the past, and warmed by the emotions and passions of the day, by Dante Alighieri, who was born in 1265, and who consequently embodied essentially that marvellous thirteenth century which was the spring-time of modern thought and civilization.

Inspired by the pages of their national poet, Andrea Orgagna and his brother Bernardo first painted subjects from the legends "Heaven and Hell." They may be seen in the Chapel of the Strozzi, in Santa Maria Novella, Florence. Andrea also painted the "Triumph of Death" and the "Last Judgment" in the Campo Santo of Pisa, and Bernardo depicted the "Inferno." Both brothers naïvely followed the example of their great teacher also in awarding the Palm of Heaven and the Tortures of Hell to their private friends or foes. Michael Angelo was also entirely inspired by the poem of Dante, and the world must ever mourn the loss, by shipwreck, between Civita

¹ We learn from Byzantine chronicles, amongst numberless analogous facts, that Bagoris, King of the Bulgarians, invited a certain Greek monk called Metodio to paint a room in his palace at Nicopolis. The artist painted a "Last Judgment" so expressively, and portrayed the torments and desolation of the damned in such lively colours, that the King became a convert to the Christian faith; and, after some brief space, his subjects followed the example of their lord. See Deschazelle's "Histoire des Arts," vol. ii, liv. v., p. 348.

Vecchia and Pisa, of his series of drawings illustrative of the *Divina Commedia*.

The abside of St. Angelo in Formis is purely Byzantine, both in form and in painting. At the summit of the hemicycle the Holy Ghost is figured as a dove of bright and varied plumage.

Beneath this symbolical attribute is seen a gigantic figure of our Saviour, in the act of benediction, seated on a magnificent throne. We must always bear in mind that the conventional Byzantine mode of expressing reverence or awe was by painting the chief personages, or Holy Saints, in dimensions of the greatest size, whilst the less important personages were diminished in proportion to their insignificance. Such is the case in St. Angelo in Formis. The carnation tints were originally intended to be of the favourite Greek tint of ripe corn, but time has, of course, darkened them. The hair and beard were fair and divided as usual. To the right of the Lord is written I. C. C. X. To the left is seen the Eagle; his claw rests on the Book of Gospels. On the latter is written ϕ (*fi*), and there are also the emblems of the other Evangelists underneath. A noble figure of the Archangel Michael is conspicuous amongst other saints; he seems to dominate the central group; fillets or ribbons of various colours seem to fall from his hair about his face. His splendid jewelled robe is a rich, glowing gold colour, striped with red and black. This elegant figure is also adorned by a broad band or ribbon, studded with gems; from the throat it follows the outline of the figure to his side; he holds a sceptre, and is painted on an azure ground. Two other personages, on the same level, and in sumptuous ecclesiastical vestments, also merit attention.

To the right of the spectator is seen the effigy of St. Benedict, an open book in his right hand, and a pastoral staff in his left. Opposite to him is the Abbot Desiderius, afterwards Victor III., successor to Gregory VII. (in the year 1086). He seems in the act of presenting to our Lord the model of the present Basilica. This is, of course, an historical deduction, but has all intrinsic probability in

its favour. (There is no other portrait of Desiderius of any kind extant.)

In the interior of the lateral arches forming the naves of the Basilica, many important episodes from the New Testament are depicted, but those from the Old are still concealed beneath whitewash. We see the Invitation to Zaccheus, the Piscina Probatice, the Resurrection of Lazarus, the Woman taken in Adultery, the Last Supper, the Washing of the Apostles' Feet, the Entry of our Lord into Jerusalem, the Kiss of Judas, the "Cireneo," the Crucifixion, the Deposition, the Angel at the Sepulchre interrogated by the three Maries, Christ in Limbo, St. Peter on the Waters.

In all these paintings our Saviour only has the nimbus, or glory, round His head, and He and His disciples have invariably the Roman dress. All the other figures, male, female, rich, poor, of all nations, are painted in the contemporary costumes known as "Lombard."

The portraits above referred to seem to be intended for likenesses, and everywhere we discern an intention of copying the natural form, where the personages are not divine or of semi-deified traditional importance. These are rigorously portrayed according to the strict Byzantine rules of ecclesiastical adornment in churches, from which no departure was ever permitted.

Besides these comprehensive and fascinating series of mural paintings in St. Angelo in Formis at Capua, and Donna Regina in Naples, there were other remains of historical paintings in the ancient Palace of Naples called the Vicaria.

Here Frederick II. was depicted on his throne, and Pier della Vigna in his "cattedra."

Francesco Pipino and Bernardo da Tenola were eye witnesses of these paintings. Tiraboschi, quoting their authority,¹ remarks that Vasari is evidently ill informed when he awards to Cimabue the honour of awakening painting from her slumbers.

Our present knowledge of art affords ample proof that

¹ Tiraboschi, tom. iv. lib. 3.

the revival was simultaneous throughout the Peninsula, following invariably the course of civilization. We have narrated this in the history of the Southern Provinces; we have observed it in wealthy and enterprising Venice; we have seen how St. Marco arose under the Doge Orseoli; and even in obscure and more central country towns, churches, and monasteries, daily evidence is afforded of the existence of a race of humble and unknown artists, all working contemporaneously; at first, after the rigid Byzantine types, and then softening into the uncouth, but yet naturalistic style, to which genius lent subsequently the imperishable grace, dignity, feeling, design, colour, and elevation which make the Italian school immortal.

The village of Nazaret, near the Camaldoli of Naples, contains the next specimens of early art to be referred to. These frescoes are attributed to the twelfth century, according to a date found in the church.¹

The compositions are modified by the creed and realistic tendencies of the Neapolitan artist, but their Byzantine derivation is otherwise clear, and we shall have occasion, as we proceed, to remark on other peculiarities. The dilapidated chapel which contains these treasures was accidentally discovered some years ago in a thicket overgrown with brushwood and trailing evergreens, near the spot visited by strangers for classical remains, and called *le cento Càmerelle*. When the mass of decaying vegetation was cleared away, the chapel was found embedded in the tufo out of which it had been originally hewn. It evidently had been added to and enlarged during the course of ages, a vault having been added to the original edifice; apparently a refuge from persecution for holy anchorites. Many archaic figures of saints and ascetics have thus remained to us devoid of the heads, the process of vaulting having destroyed the

¹ Information on the subject may be found in a pamphlet called "Memoria sopra varj dipinti a fresco del secolo XII., esistenti nel Villaggio di Nazaret presso i Camaldoli di Napoli." Memoria letta nella Reale Accademia di Archeologia, Letteratura, e Belle Arti, da Camillo Guerra. Napoli, 1867.

upper part of the figure. The figures are all painted on the tufo, prepared for colour by a coat of *intonaco*. The later and more interesting frescoes, those of the date 1200, present a series of subjects from the New Testament, of which the finest is the "Crucifixion." There is natural pathos and grace in the head of our Saviour bent on His mother, a woman painted ripe in years, sinking in anguish into the arms of the two other Maries.

The composition of the group recalls the swoon of St. Catherine of Siena by Razzi. The Magdalene meanwhile, with hair unbound, clasps the foot of the Cross with an impassioned gesture, whilst the youthful St. John, standing opposite the group of Maries, gazes mournfully on the sufferings of the Lord. A soldier points to the latter, and we read the legend "*Hic vere Filius Dei est:*" which He is said to have pronounced. Up to the middle of the fourteenth century we may remark that the Byzantine peculiarity of placing by the figures the texts or legends which the painting expressed, was retained in the Latin Church art. The writing, carefully done by a finished scribe, is that known to be habitually used in the era of Frederick II., 1198, and seems to agree with the rest of the work.

In the vaulted niche excavated in the tufo and placed immediately below the crucifixion is a peculiar and interesting rendering of the "Baptism of our Lord" derived from the early Byzantine.

Jesus, whose head, shoulders, and trunk only are seen above the waters of the Jordan, receives the sacrament of baptism at the hands of God the Father; the latter is painted as a venerable sage, draped in the Roman toga, who appears in the act of benediction by imposition of hands.

Within the nimbus which surrounds the heads of the Father and Son the sign of the Trinity, Δ , the triangle, is described: a dove, typical of the Holy Ghost, is also seen above the two. The mystic rainbow encircles the whole group.¹

¹ The same treatment of the subject is observable in the miniatures

On each of the lateral sides of this curious group various episodes from Gospel history are described. There is the "Annunciation," in the usual manner, and a lovely composition of the Virgin and Child. The latter stands on a platform, or step, by her side, embracing her with infantine affection, whilst she bends over Him with maternal grace and tenderness. Two angels, in separate compartments, seem to watch this charming group. The Infant Saviour is dressed in a long tunic, and his feet are covered with shoes; indeed, the earlier Byzantine masters opposed and abhorred any uncovered representations of the human form beyond the mere face and hands, as recalling the shameful and horrid abominations of heathen worship.

Another small picture, situated near the last, shows us St. Joseph as an aged man in adoration of the Infant Saviour, whilst one of the small barrel flasks of the country and a wallet hang on a leafless bough, to signify the flight into Egypt in winter.

The evident effort to represent nature in these paintings and the grace and elevation of their religious sentiment are astonishing when we reflect that, if the date 1200 be correct, they were almost a century anterior to Cimabue, and that the Neapolitan States have never been alluded to as the birthplace of modern art.¹

We have also the evidence of Charles of Anjou, who in 1268, on coming to Naples from Florence, where he had witnessed the public and enthusiastic triumph of Cimabue, preferred the works of the Neapolitan brothers di Stefani to his; and to them accordingly was committed

of a Greek Evangelarion manuscript of the twelfth century, in the Library of the Vatican. See D'Agincourt, *Peintures*, Tab. lix., No. 4, T. B. 11, 190.

¹ On the right hand of the Cross of the Saviour, the words, "Marco Marte fecit," and "M. C. C." are found written in a small irregular running hand, which in character tallies with the writing of the legends formerly mentioned, with this difference, that the latter, in St. Angelo in Formis, have been carefully executed by a professional scribe. On consulting D'Agincourt, these characters correspond with the style of writing used during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. See *Storia dell' Arte*, Tav. lxiv.

the task of painting and decorating the Chapel of the Castel dell'Uovo and the Church of Santa Maria la Nuova.

These painters, mentioned in the Chronicle of the notary Cresciuolo, are supposed to have been born about 1230, and may have been pupils of their predecessor Marco Marte. Another name, that of Tesaurus, is also found and reported in chronicles of ancient date.¹

The Chapel and Catacombs of the Badia d' Ogliara, near Amalfi.—All recent researches and discoveries confirm the fact that the best style and the purest design prevailed in the earliest ages of the Church, when the art of drawing from nature was still practised. Thus in the Catacombs of Naples a beautiful bust figure of our Lord has lately been discovered; the portrait has a fine oval face, pale complexion, beautiful eyes, and finely-moulded features, agreeing with our conception of the ideal, but yet with the living expression of a real man. Not a trace of conventionalism is to be observed in this noble image, which is amongst the earliest recorded, and has been discovered by a chance search.²

Another most remarkable instance of the superiority of the design in the primitive Christian Church, when our Saviour and the Madonna are represented, occurs where catacombs hitherto unknown have recently been discovered: at the Badia dell' Ogliara on the coast of Amalfi between Vetri and Majuri.

We have thus the extraordinary and unlooked-for advantage of comparing the works of the fourth century with those of the tenth and eleventh in the body of the church itself; the latter, though highly curious and interesting, from their symbolical language and Byzantine derivation, being far inferior in artistic merit to the former, which date from the very earliest Christian times.

¹ Consult B. Di Domenici, *Vite dei Pittori*. See Neapolitan Naples, 1742, p. 17.

² This beautiful specimen of primitive art, which has been admirably copied in fine water colours by the Neapolitan artist Autoriello, forms part of the collection of illustrations published by the Cavaliere Salazar as specimens of ancient art.

It was the existence of these catacombs which must originally have led to the erection of an ancient chapel in this desert spot. The first inhabitants were two hermits, John and Peter, who made it their residence, and attracted others there in the year 973. The original chapel was merely a grotto, which these pious men dedicated to the Virgin; it was situated in a *macchia*, or wild tangle of brushwood and native olive trees; hence the name *dell' Ogliara*. At a later period, the hermits took the robe and rule of St. Benedict. The sacred character of the inmates and the sanctity of the locality attracted crowds, and the chapel was painted by an artist of renown, Leone Monaco, whom the Abbot Desiderius, of Monte Cassino, had entrusted to paint the hermitage of San Germano.

At the *Badia dell' Ogliara*, we observe first the Symbolical Hand, of gigantic size. It seems as if issuing from a cloud, and in the act of blessing mankind; it is painted in the "edicola," or chapel, of the *Badia*.¹

Many of the later paintings are destroyed, others have been injured by bad attempts at restoration. Amongst those which remain are the figures of the Virgin and Child in the apse of the church. Mary holds the Saviour in her arms, and presents Him to the adoration of the faithful. She is attended by the Apostles St. Peter and St. Paul. Though the sentiment is fine, the drawing is meagre and poor, especially when contrasted with the fine design and nobler conception of the frescoes in the catacombs; the latter, having been preserved from the weather, and from the ravages of time and man, are in an excellent state of preservation. The very existence of these catacombs was unsuspected; their discovery was the mere result of chance; a hole was made almost at random at the foot of a stair,² in a wall, and a spacious locality was entered into. By means of the electric light

¹ The Symbolical Hand, representing Divine power, is met with frequently in the older paintings; amongst others, in the catacombs of Rome, on the marble pilaster or column at Gaeta, and on the side walls of the *Badia* at Subiaco.

² This discovery, made during the year 1870, was also owing to the active initiation of the *Cavaliere Salazaro*.

it was discovered that paintings existed on the walls, and when the coating of dirt and dust that adhered to them was removed, one of the early Christian sanctuaries was revealed, and many very fine paintings were discerned amongst *Ovuli*, where the bones of early Christians were laid, and *Loculi*, where the lamps, constantly lighted, were attached.

The vast vaulted roof has been cut out of the natural rock. The first fresco on the right hand of the entrance shows us the Virgin Mary as a woman of matronly years; she stands in the attitude of prayer, her hands slightly raised on either side. The Saviour, wearing the robe of a Roman legislator and holding a roll of papyrus, stands by her side; on the other is the Archangel Michael. The design is good, full of reverential expression, and evinces a high and solemn sentiment in art. The two other most remarkable frescoes are of the fifth century. One of them represents the Saviour, in the dress of an Athenian orator, holding a scroll, emblematical of the "written Word;" with His right hand He is in the act of blessing; two saints or apostles, in the sacerdotal robe of the period¹ (with the tunic vest girded at the waist), are seen standing at His side.

The figure on the right of Jesus holds the New Testament in his right hand, whilst He gives His blessing with the left.

In the third compartment, or ovula, the Saviour is seen with the Archangel Michael and an apostle in sacerdotal robes.

We discover overwhelming evidence in favour of the advantages enjoyed by Nicola Pisano. When a youth of fifteen, he accompanied Frederick II. to Naples, and entered at once upon a school of art immensely in advance of the uncouth and infantine attempts at sculpture he had alone been enabled to see

¹ During the whole of the third century of the Christian era ecclesiastics were in the habit of wearing white linen tunics and the *Dalmatica talara*, with long full sleeves of the same uniform colour. The next modification was when the casule were introduced, as in the above frescoes.

in North or Central Italy. Ten years of study, and the fire of native genius did the rest; and in the year 1260 the world first beheld, what we now happily still can behold after eight centuries—the Pulpit of the Baptistery of Pisa.

We know Nature never acts by sudden leaps; all in it is progressive development. In this masterpiece we can trace the traditions of Southern Italy, but animated by the indefinable fire of genius which heralded the “revival” of art in Upper Italy.

In the bassi-relievi are seen the ruder and more violent emotions of anger and despair; in the “Adoration of the Magi” the florid Roman style is most characteristic; the heads are too large—the common defect of all early sculpture, especially in the receding figures. The angels are mere Roman antiques; so are the horses. In the “Crucifixion” the body of the martyred Redeemer seems modelled after an antique Hercules. In the “Last Judgment” our Lord is seen enthroned. In His fine attitude the vigour of Nicola’s genius breaks forth; beneath Him are the “Elect,” the “Lost,” “Resurrection,” and “Lucifer.”

Satan is here figured in a grotesque, combining an antique masque with the fabled body of a Chimæra, or of a biblical monster. Other dæmons resemble him. Satan is also represented on another occasion as a hideous masque head on the body of an infant.

We recognise here the Etruscan grotesque element, so inferior to the dignified Byzantine conception of the Father of Evil, whose repulsive form is created by the awful power of sin alone, and from which the grotesque is entirely wanting.¹

The works on which the fame of Niccola Pisano chiefly rests are: “the Pulpit of the Baptistery at Pisa,” of the “Cathedral at Siena,” and the “Arca, or Shrine of St. Dominic,” for the church of that saint at Bologna, the latter being his greatest and most original work.

¹ For more detailed accounts of the Pulpit at Pisa, see note in appendix.

The Pulpit of the Baptistery of Pisa was completed in the year 1260, as appears by the inscription; the contract for the second was drawn up in 1266, and, from the date of the translation of the remains of St. Dominic, it is supposed that the intermediate years were dedicated by Niccola to the preparation of a worthy receptacle in which they might repose.

Niccola had an entirely new field opened to him in the episodes of the life of this truculent and sanguinary champion of the Church. No tradition existed to guide him in this entirely novel path. The stories were to be given clearly and precisely, emanating solely from his own genius.

This extraordinary work, which forms an epoch in art, and which was the first original monument of Central Italian sculpture, is so much less known than even the Baptistery Pulpit of Pisa, that we subjoin in the appendix Lord Lyndsay's account of it for the sake of distant readers.¹

We have now reached the brilliant dawn of art in Central Italy, a period so universally and engrossingly interesting in the history of modern society, when the force of genius was gladly confessed, and the different commonwealths vied with one another to attract artists and men of letters inside their walls.

Bologna had commissioned the shrine of St. Dominic, which opened to the world the inventive faculty of Niccola Pisano; and the native city of St. Francis soon followed the example, erecting the Church of Assisi, where Giotto found the same opportunity of tasking his original powers of conception and composition in the stories of the humble and heavenly saint.

Before the time of Cimabue all that was known of art in Tuscany was derived from soulless and servile copies of the lowest models of the Byzantine decadence. Into these he breathed a more life-like sentiment and a better colouring. His disciple, Giotto, born, in the heart of Tuscany, from humble parents, next far outstripped him.

¹ See Note 2, after the account of the Pulpit of Pisa.

The same instinctive feeling of the only source of true delineation, *study from Nature*, which prompted him, as a shepherd boy to sketch his sheep on a stone, never forsook him during his future career.

Giotto's fame arose rapidly. Boniface VIII. sent messengers from Rome to ascertain if all he heard of him were true. Called before the commissioners, he immediately described a circle on the paper handed to him to design on; and the Pope, who understood all that was implied by the execution of this feat, unaided by compass or rule, was satisfied that he had not been over-praised. Giotto was, in consequence, invited to Rome. Most of his works have long perished, but his "Bark of St. Peter," in mosaic, called "La Navicella di San Pietro," may still be seen affixed to the front of the portico of the church of St. Peter.

On his return to Florence he was entrusted with the most important works—the Palace of the Podestà, and the church of Santa Croce.

The intelligent researches of two gentlemen—one English, Mr. Kirkup, and the other Italian, Signor Bezzi—who relied on the assertion of Vasari that Giotto had painted the portrait of Dante in the gloria of the chapel of the Palazzo del Podestà,¹ led to the discovery, about twenty-seven years ago, of the grand composition, so long lost under whitewash, in which the figure of the poet is the centre of interest.

The head of our Saviour surmounts all, and the escutcheon of Florence appears lower down, supported by two angels, and having two rows of saints, male and female, to the right and left.

In front we see a procession of the Magnates (Magnati) of the city, headed by two crowned personages, close to one of whom stands Dante. He holds a pomegranate flower, the emblem of concord, and is robed as a Prior;

¹ This most interesting building, on the site of the palace of Hugo, Marquis of Tuscany, was degraded into a common gaol for two hundred years; it has now been rescued, restored, re-opened, and forms at present the interesting museum known as the "Museo Nazionale."

he wears the "cappuccio," or hood, with the graceful falling end, of the day. His appearance denotes wisdom, conciliation, and dignity, contrasting significantly with the arrogant bearing of his companion, who worthily represents the original of Dino Compagni's sketch of Corso Donati.¹

This painting was probably executed in the year 1300, in the thirty-fifth year of the age of Dante. He was one of the priors of the Republic in that year, and was exiled in 1302.

The remaining walls of the chapel are entirely painted by Giotto, but there is an exquisite Madonna in the sacristy, of whom we have no information remaining. Giotto also painted in fresco four chapels in the church of Santa Croce. One of these, the Peruzzi, was cleared of whitewash about thirty years ago. We see in the Feast of Herodius and the Resurrection of St. John the Baptist some of the truth of sentiment and genuineness of design of the master; but drawing and accessories are still feeble and conventional. Close at hand, these may be compared with his later works in the chapel of the Bardi, where stories from the life of St. Francis of Assisi are seen in his happiest manner.² The portrait of the saint himself (alleged to be by the hand of Cimabue) is also seen upon application. A gloomy and repulsive picture is shewn.³ It is not possible Cimabue should really have painted it from life, as St. Francis died 1224; but perhaps he may have copied or touched up some rude effigy, which the zeal and affection, rather than the skill, of a disciple may have preserved.

Neither Dante nor Giotto experienced the chilling fate that so often attends genius; they were not so totally in intellectual advance of their age as to be misunderstood by it; on the contrary, their fellow-men thought and felt through the voice of one, and by the pencil of

¹ Dino Compagni says of Corso Donati that "the earth seemed to shake under his feet."

² We shall later recur to these frescoes, with a fuller description of the Saint's life.

³ There is another very ancient, very venerated, and very hideous portrait of St. Francis in a village N.E. of Bologna, highly curious.

the other. Their own age fervently revered both; and the element of cordial appreciation by their contemporaries, so often denied to the greatest talent, was fully and overflowing granted to them.

Both met in Padua in the year 1306, where Giotto was employed in painting the frescoes of the Chapel of the Arena, built three years previously by Enrico, the son of Reginald Scrovegno.¹ This most interesting little chapel belonged to the *Fraternità de' Cavalieri di Santa Maria (Mater Dei)*, instituted about the commencement of the thirteenth century to promote the veneration of the Virgin Mary. Indeed, the legendary history of the Madonna is nowhere else in Italy so fully represented as in the Duomo of Orvieto. It is divided into forty-four compartments, and these, with the allegorical paintings, fill the whole area of the church.

The story of the Virgin and of our Saviour, from the repulse of Joachim in the Temple to the coronation of Mary in Heaven, are seen on the nave, the triumphal arch, and the choir. A Christ in glory is seen in the "lunette" above the arch. The Last Judgment covers the whole entrance wall, and the Theological and Cardinal Virtues, with their opposite Vices ingeniously allegorised, face each other to the right and left, below the windows of the nave.² These frescoes form an important era in the progressive march of Giotto's mind; besides the lively fancy and varied invention shown in the attitudes of the figures, there is a human sentiment of life-like emotion, passion, and interest breathed over the whole; nature seems bursting from the swathing bands of old conventionalisms; the anatomy is, of course, childish, and the drawing often defective; but no one can mistake the artist having struck on the right path.

¹ A noted usurer placed in hell by Dante in expiation of his avarice and usury. The name of Dante appears as witness to a deed dated at Padua in 1306.

² These compositions are represented in fourteen single figures in "chiaroscuro." For an excellent and minute description of these allegories so slightly alluded to here, from want of space, the reader is referred to Lord Lyndsay's work on Christian Art, Letter IV., p. 196.

In the arena the landscape is still Byzantine, and the compositions are derived from the usual fount of traditional art. As yet the lofty ideality which formed the latter glory of the Italian school is wanting; but the great occasion which now tasked his genius, the decoration of the Church of Assisi, called forth all the talent that in him lay. At Assisi, in company with the choicest artists of the day, he was employed on a series of frescoes for the church and sanctuary of the popular Saint.

The unworldliness, the tenderness, the warmth, and the perfectness of faith in St. Francis had, from the first, placed him apart from his fellow-creatures, and his name had already been invested with the reverence and connected with the marvels of legendary heroes. His name, his dress—that of the tertiary mendicant order—and his acts, were literally the “household words” of the poor. At Assisi, his birthplace, a basilica already existed on the spot, venerated for the martyrdom of Rufinus; it had already some paintings on the walls when the new church was added to it, and became the sanctuary of St. Francis. Giunta da Siena, and other artists of the mystic Byzantine school, had painted there, and to these succeeded Cimabue and Giotto. The latter painted the life of St. Francis in a series of subjects in the naturalistic manner. The improvement in colouring, perspective, and proportion, together with a more life-like movement in the figures, is discernible in the groups of the upper church; these seem to have been executed by Giotto’s own hand. The ceilings of the lower church, which certainly were painted by him, display even more breadth of treatment, freedom of brush, and desire to imitate nature.¹

The harsh, crude outline of former days now began to be softened, and the effect of light and shade in giving relief now seems to have been discovered. We can trace even the improvement which practice in the mere technical details gave the artist in his successive works.

¹ See note in appendix for further particulars.

From Assisi Giotto returned to Florence; from thence, after a lengthened stay, he made a second tour in Upper Italy to Verona, Ravenna, Padua, and Ferrara. He executed works in all these cities. He also went to Avignon and to Naples.

As works of his maturest powers, we may instance the "Coronation of the Virgin," in the church of Santa Croce of Florence; and a series of small paintings of the lives of our Saviour and St. Francis, executed on the panels of the wardrobes of the sacristy of that church. These are now carefully preserved in the Academy of Fine Arts, the colouring as fresh and brilliant as if but laid on recently.

To this period may also be referred the great fresco of the old refectory of the convent of Santa Croce—the "Cenacolo," or "Last Supper," which has served for the prototype of nearly all the compositions on the same subject.¹

The frescoes of the Bardi chapel in the Santa Croce are also eminent for their display of judgment, sobriety, taste, and dignity of feeling—the first on the right-hand side of the high altar, and next to the Peruzzi chapel. These frescoes describe the life of St. Francis, and were painted, most probably, after Giotto returned from Assisi; he had, therefore, the traditions fresh in his mind. In the year 1852² the whitewash was carefully removed by the painter Bianchi, and the eloquent picture of mediæval religious life was restored to the admiration of the world.

The entire restoration of the church is being effected, and the frescoes are found to harmonize with incomparable solemnity, and with the stained glass of the windows. As they are not very generally known even yet, a brief notice may be acceptable.

The first picture of the series represents "The

¹ Compare Lippo Lippi (in S. Pier Gattolino), Andrea del Sarto's (at the Badia), Leonardo's (at Milan), and that of Ghirlandajo (in the Refectory of St. Mark's); also the one attributed to Raphael, in Florence (Via Fiesolana), discovered a quarter of a century since.

² No printed account, that we know of, has appeared descriptive of these recently discovered frescoes.

Salutation." — (St. Francis was a native of Assisi, born in 1182, son of a wealthy cloth merchant, Pietro Bernardone, who wished the youth to be trained to his own trade ; but severe illness having made all his thoughts centre on heavenly things, he fell into disgrace with his father). In the market-place of Assisi a half-witted man is seen, who, having taken off his garment, laid it before the youth, that he might walk on it, prophesying his future fame. Next, St. Francis is seen giving his cloak to a poor officer. Then we have the vision of Pope Innocent III.

This Pontiff had at first refused to sanction the rule of St. Francis, but was warned in a dream that St. Francis would "support the Church on his back." St. John Lateran was at that time in a tottering state ; and we see the Pope asleep, and the Saint, towering on high, leans against a church.

"St. Francis before the Soldan of Syria."—He volunteered to undergo the ordeal by fire to effect the conversion of the Mahomedan. The Soldan declined to permit the sacrifice ; but, feeling respect and admiration for the zeal of St. Francis, released him and his companions uninjured. We see the fires prepared for the ordeal ; and the discomfited faces of the Mahomedan priests contrast with the calm dignity of the Christian saint.

"St. Francis Preaching before the Pope and Cardinals."—They are seated under a loggia, in appropriate attitudes.

"The Apparition of St. Francis at Arles, 1224."—St. Anthony of Padua was preaching before a general chapter of the order held at Arles (1224), when St. Francis appeared in the midst of the brethren, with arms extended in the act of benediction.

"The Illness of St. Francis." (Full of natural pathos and dignity.)—Two years had elapsed since he had received the stigmata ; he was unable to walk from a painful malady of the feet, and he was removed to the hospital of Santa Maria degli Angeli, a mere living corpse. He caused himself to be laid naked on the

pavement of the ward, in the hope that, ere he died, he might once more inspire some breast with charity.

A brother he had chosen brought him a robe and cord of the order, commanding him to accept them as a "pauper of Christ."

St. Francis at this greatly rejoiced, and gave thanks to God that, unto his last hour, he had kept his faith to his "Lady Poverty" inviolate.

In the picture, St. Francis is seen sitting up in the hospital of his convent, blessing his children, and instructing them in the doctrine of patience. We may suppose him exhorting his followers to seek after Poverty, and Obedience to the Church of Rome, ere he finally laid himself down to die.

"The Death of St. Francis."—"And thus," says St. Bonaventure, "all mysteries having at length been accomplished in him, and his most holy soul being freed from the flesh, and absorbed into the abyss of the light of God (in abyssum divinæ claritatis absorptâ), the blessed man fell asleep in the Lord."

The parting scene is most beautifully depicted by Giotto. The saint is seen laid out dead, with a look of heavenly peace on his face. Monks and priests crowd sorrowing around him, with accurate observance of nature; some of the younger priests and acolytes look on more indifferently (two generations invariably feeling so differently upon imaginative religious topics). The soul of the saint is borne heavenwards by angels, and the sceptical Jerome is seen kneeling and touching the stigmata, the reality of which he had doubted.

The study of these and other frescoes by this great master will convince the spectator that his celebrity was amply merited; he towers far above his contemporaries; even in mere technical skill he eminently surpasses them. His breadth, distinctness, directness, truth, and sentiment, were all his own.

The "Noli me tangere," and the "Raising of Lazarus" in the chapel of the Bargello, were probably executed at this time.

The fame of Giotto's talents, and the goodness of his nature, caused him to be employed at the Papal Court of Avignon in 1323-4; but his works have almost all perished. He was greatly favoured by King Robert of Naples, for whom he executed in fresco a series of illustrious historical characters in the great hall of the palace, as well as numerous subjects from the New and Old Testaments in the Chapel of Santa Chiara and the Incoronata, all destroyed except those in the last-named chapel—"the Church and the Seven Sacraments"—which are very good.

The last period of his busy life was spent in Florence, where he was employed as architect and sculptor. In 1332 he was chosen to erect the campanile, ever since so celebrated, as to distance in beauty and fame every other bell tower in the world. This appointment, and the title and charge of Capo Maestro of the Cathedral of Florence, were conferred on him for the "universality of his talents." He was also appointed to receive the yearly salary of one hundred gold florins, and had the privilege of citizenship, which opened to him the power of accepting any charge in the commonwealth; but he was strictly prohibited from, and these honours were expressly dependent on, his not leaving the city.

The Duomo of Florence, with the exception of the cupola and the western façade, was then complete. Andrea Pisano was employed on the marble sculpture of the latter from the designs of Giotto. The baptistery of San Giovanni, a very ancient church, and originally the cathedral, was ere long to be decorated with the bronze doors Andrea was even then casting. The bell tower only was wanting. The design¹ of Giotto having been presented and approved, the Signoria passed a

¹ Giotto made a model of the proposed building, in which every stone was marked and every successive course designed with the different colours, red, white, black, &c., so as to harmonize with the cathedral and baptistery. This model was strictly adhered to during his lifetime, and even after his death, with the exception of a spire one hundred "braccie" high he had intended to have added, and which has never been built. The campanile at present inclines slightly, but perceptibly, S.E. from the perpendicular.

decree in the spring of 1334 in these terms :—" The campanile is intended to be built so as to be superior in height, splendour, and magnificence of workmanship to whatever in that kind has been achieved of old by the Greeks and Romans in the time of their most flourishing power (in tempi della loro piu florida potenza)."

There is a tone of overbearing ambition as well as of patriotic love of art in this decree, made by a mere speck of a commonwealth in a peninsula distracted by factions, and broken up into minute states, that is admirably expressive of the bold Guelphic spirit of the Signoria. Happy were they to have at hand a spirit which, like that of Giotto, could embody their aspirations, and secure for them their coveted supremacy.

The latest years of his life were spent on designs and models in relief for the bassi-relievi of the basement stories of the campanile ; the first and the second on the northern side he sculptured himself, being skilled, as we know through Ghiberti, in all the several arts.

Giotto founded a new law of colouring, and a great school of naturalistic historical paintings. His scholars and imitators, called " Giotteschi," never rose to his eminence in conceptive power, sentiment, and technical skill ; but the great tradition of the Florentine school was revived by Orcagna, Masolino da Panicale, Fra Angelico, and Masaccio. Before the close of the thirteenth century, Giotto had effected for painting the same revolution that Dante had for literature ; both were great and sincere souls, working in all singleness of heart and purpose, and concentrated in both we find the best and highest attributes of the master-mind of Italy.

CHAPTER XVI.

Sketch of the new Literary and Scientific Impulse of Italy, as developed in Tuscany and Florence. Dante considered as the Great Representative Man of his Age. Hints relative to his Ideas on Ethics, Science, Philosophy, and History, as illustrative of the noblest Synthesis described by Mediæval Times.

THE great name of Dante Alighieri towers over his contemporaries to such a degree as to leave them almost unjustly in the shade. But for the obscure and yet unremitting labours of some to whom we shall attempt to call attention, and of others, whom we can hardly do more than enumerate, our great poet's own work would have been less complete, and must have been far less interesting and instructive.

The extraordinary honour in which learning was held in Italy, and the wise forbearance which made a foreigner, if he was versed in the laws of the Peninsula, eligible to the highest municipal honour (that of Podestà) had early attracted crowds of students to the Italian Universities. The first mention of these public honours dates from 1243, says Robertson, the historian, quoting from Crévier. So high was the estimation in which these collegiate honours were held that "doctors" in the different "faculties" contended with knights for precedence, and the dispute in many cases was terminated by advancing the former to the dignity of knighthood; it was even asserted¹ that a doctor had a right to knighthood without creation.

Bartolus taught "*Doctorem actualiter regentem in jure civili per decennium effici militem ipso facto.*"

This was called "*Chevalier de Lectures.*" The

¹ Knights, and those more entitled to an equivalent appellation, are mentioned in the chronicles of Italy as *Messere* (Sir). The Creator is even styled "*Messer Domine Iddio.*"

persons advanced to that dignity were styled "Milites Clerici."

It was the homage paid to learning and the career opened by science and study that inspired the emulation and fired the ambition of the new upper or citizen classes of the towns, chiefly Guelph, which, combined with the larger experience of mankind, acquired in their extensive commercial transactions, caused the inhabitants of the municipalities to triumph, in central Italy, so completely over the overbearing and more ignorant Ghibelline nobility of the country.

During the thirteenth century the University of Bologna is reported to have attracted as many as ten thousand students at once; and the colleges of Pisa, Arezzo, and Siena came into fame. That of Pisa was early distinguished for the study of mathematics, and retains its celebrity even now. The discovery of the copy of the Pandects of Justinian at Amalfi had given a fresh impetus to legal studies, and thenceforth, partly from the bent of the national mind, partly from the necessity of learning to all youths who aspired to a career of distinction, and partly from the unforgotten traditions of the Roman law, the study of jurisprudence became the leading one to which Italian literary and practical genius was bent.

The first great Italian legist was Taddeo Accorso, or Accursius, born of humble parentage in the village of Bagnolo, then a dependence of the Gherardini family, six miles from Florence.

After many years of persevering toil, Accursius lived to see the darkness of legal science dispelled by the clearness of his own perceptions; his opinions and expositions were accepted as final by every state in Italy, and even where law was silent his private opinion was appealed to and received.

So extraordinary a case of pure legal genius, and of the reverence in which justice was held "abstractedly," is unexampled in history. Accursius' decisions and opinions influenced the jurisprudence of his country for three

centuries. He was born in the year 1182, and consequently the maturity of his intellect, and the course of his serious studies fall in that wonderful *Trecento* which is adorned by so many other creative names. His three sons, Francesco, Cervotto, and Guglielmo, were all eminent in their father's line of study.

After Taddeo Accorso, Dino di Mugello was held in high esteem; a decree of the people of Verona was passed deciding that when law and the commentaries of Accorso were silent, the opinions of Dino should be taken as law. He was teacher to the well-known Cino da Pistoja, the master of Petrarch, who, besides other verses, composed a beautiful sonnet on his death.

The medical art (it could scarcely be termed a science in those days, so strangely empirical and paradoxical was its practice) was eagerly followed in Italy. And here again Tuscan genius was not inconspicuous; for Taddeo Alderotti claims attention as one who rose from the very humblest grade of society; and in whom, up to the age of thirty,¹ no self-consciousness of superior capacity had dawned. He studied at the University of Bologna, (like Pier delle Vigne, and a long list of his illustrious countrymen besides), and ultimately became the most celebrated physician of his age. Dino del Garbo, Tommaso his son, and Torreggiano were his pupils. All were distinguished for learning and ability; and all resided at Bologna, which was then the centre of intellectual progress in all its branches.

Towards the close of the twelfth century, the arithmetical system of the Hindoos was introduced into Italy by Leonardo Fibonacci, the son of an office clerk of a merchant of Pisa; he founded the great mathematical school of that city, and gave the first example of a purely scientific work in his *Treatise on Mathematics*, which was afterwards copied, and borrowed from by

¹ We call attention to this, because it is so remarkable in Italy, where everything that any man ever learns by study is acquired before the age of twenty-two at latest; after that, inoccupation often succeeds.

others, who acquired fame and emolument from the knowledge and researches of a man who lived unnoticed and unknown; an object of derision and contempt to the ignorant, from his abstraction and homeliness of speech and manner, which won him the epithet of "il Bighellone."

Leonardo Fibonacci composed his great work, fixing for ever the basis of mathematical science in Italy, and indirectly in Europe, contemporaneously with the alchemic studies of Roger Bacon, Alberto Magno, and Raimondo Lullo; but we do not hear of his having, like these eminent philosophers, speculated on the "quantities and qualities" of "atomic virtue," in view of the formation of the "philosopher's stone" by the transmutation of metals; nor do we hear of his wandering, like them, in the mazes of "judicial astrology."

Leonardo Fibonacci is thus the first *scientific man*, properly so called, in Italy. He was devoted to the demonstration of pure, perfect, abstract, scientific truth, wholly apart from any lucrative advantage to be gained by it; but his own studies and the knowledge which enabled him to write his treatise were derived from the Greeks, Jews, and Arabians.

The study of astronomy at that date was confined to observations on the phases of the moon and the planets, chiefly with the aim of establishing correctly the dates of the movable feasts of the Church. Historians chronicle with all care the appearances of meteors and of eclipses; to predict them was considered the perfection of sublime and recondite science.

What the thirteenth century shows us is the astonishing sense of its deficiencies and the gigantic efforts made to enlighten itself. The efforts of the Church were unremitting at that period to convey and spread the rudiments of knowledge, the arts of reading and of writing, the elementary knowledge of grammar, of agriculture, of elegant and humanizing as well as of industrial arts. Nor can Italy ever be said to have suffered an entire relapse into barbarism, in the sense of complete extinction of the very germs of science and of the useful arts.

The great Benedictine fraternity of Monte Cassino and the kindred houses of the order preserved many traditions ; commerce perpetually added to the stock. Every Greek, Jew, or Arabian who arrived in the Peninsula brought his share of the learning of the day. Grammar schools were never wholly forsaken, and the spirit of adventure which urged hundreds of thousands of Western warriors and merchants to explore the East, could not but make the former feel shame when comparing the acquirements of the gentlemen of the Islamite with those of a Frank noble—" Qui, attendu son rang de gentil homme, ne savait pas écrire ;" the formula we find, at a far later date, in French baronial charters. The peculiar qualities that distinguished the Italians of that day were not unlike in their practical and positive aims, conducted not with the mere minute chaffering of the peddler, but with far-seeing wisdom, perseverance, and energy of those which have subsequently distinguished the British commercial classes.

Like these, the Italians early turned their attention to the regions of the so aptly termed exhaustless East ; a continent which, the deeper it was penetrated, seemed to prove the richer in all the most precious, useful, and coveted treasures so irresistibly dear to human nature. The Tartaric conquests first opened a highway to Roman Catholic missions and mercantile enterprise into Central Asia ; but all previous isolated attempts were obscured by the adventures of the famous Venetian traveller, Marco Polo.¹

Up to that time the jealousies of race, religion, and military dominion had closed Central Asia quite as effectually to the Western World as Central Africa until recently has been closed to ourselves ; but the great Mongolian conquests of Genghis Khan, and his encampments in the Crimea and in Armenia, altered these sullen and suspicious laws of exclusion.

To Genghis Khan the enemies to be feared were those

¹ His " memoranda," so remarkable for discrimination, sense, accuracy, and moderation, have been lately republished.

at his hand, and he had the sagacity to comprehend that Western merchants, and travellers, and teachers were the foes of his foes, and consequently half his friends. The Tartars had no creed of religious intolerance. Christian teachers experienced no difficulties in penetrating amongst them ; nor were the pleasing rites of Eastern hospitality, and of a certain reasonable order and form wanting, when the merchants of Italy followed, in quest of new markets and of lawful trade.

The route lay by the Black Sea, on the shores of which some one or other of the vast Mongolian armies was sure to be encamped. At the outposts, the traveller was expected to profess himself the missionary or envoy of some State or chief in power at the time. This procured him a special attention and escort to the first Mongolian settlement, and from that to the next in succession, until he reached the headquarters of the Khan, whose famous black tent at Kara-Karoun formed the central spot of Oriental commerce and wealth. Untold treasures were amassed at this spot ; treasures perpetually accumulated. But so abstemious in their habits were the frugal conquerors, that, in addition to the plain tent of "black camel's hair" of their monarch above mentioned, their daily fare was so indescribably meagre and shadowy, being chiefly a handful of dry oats and a few sour curds, that the unhappy missionaries of the Church, though well used to spare fare, to fasts and to vigils, were often exposed to the torments of hunger, amidst the profuse treasures of gold, jewels, stuffs, and spices lavished everywhere around them, because it was the custom of the Tartars to live on the sparest diet.

M. Libri, in his able work upon the "Science of Mathematics in Italy," remarks that the Mongolian conquests were in no small degree owing "to their extraordinary powers of abstemiousness." Means of transport, and food for horses, and even cattle, they could always command, and as they themselves required little or none, there were few obstacles to their progress at will in any direction.

The Roman missionaries are peculiarly touching in their narratives of their pangs from hunger, so strangely contrasted with the boundless profusion of luxury and generosity of the Khan to them and to all around him. Nor were these fabulous narratives. Their accuracy has been literally ascertained.¹ We read of a "gift of five hundred chariots of treasure" made by the Khan; of a kennel of ten thousand dogs; of ten thousand falconers hired for the sport of hawking; of one hundred thousand horses all ready for mounting in the stables; of five thousand elephants, all which, the latter laden with precious stuffs and other offerings, were distributed as gifts on certain days in the year.

This wise profusion in a monarch whose abode was the "Black Tent," and whose food the "handful of millet and sour curds," explains the power of the Khan over his fellow men.

Marco Polo, in his remarkable memoir on foreign travel, "*Il Milione*" (which was first written in the dialect of Provence), gives a graphic and interesting account of the Asiatic nations amongst whom he sojourned twenty-one years, partly at the court of Kublai, partly amongst other peoples, but always as envoy of the great Khan. From China he writes an account, not to be mistaken, of a real printing press, and of an institution analogous to the post office of our days. He found bank notes in currency there, and even a rude attempt at engraving. They were acquainted also, in China, with the practical value of coal for the use of the industrial arts.

The works of Marco Polo proved of inestimable value to his countrymen, to whom they offered not only many sagacious hints and great information of the most useful kind, to train the future race of merchants, but they opened far wider horizons for the exercise of the higher order of faculties.

¹ Even in our days, the writer of these pages was told by a little Russian princess, that the envoy of the Shah of Persia, on being asked what he thought of the splendours of an "imperial *fete*," answered, "I have seen about as many jewels as are worn by one of our camels on a feast day!"

The wonders Marco Polo beheld and narrated were, however, received with the characteristic spite of ignorance and jealousy, and his fellow citizens, we hear, were wont to jeer and deride, in his declining years, their honourable and spotless fellow citizen, all the while they reaped harvests of gain by means of the knowledge and experience he had generously laid open to them.

The literary history of Florence is, as it were, a chapter apart, self-complete, full of interest, full of grace, full of genius, but yet, as it were, isolated from all her other titles to fame.

How that lovely language was first formed, how it grew in grace, in strength, in elegance, and completeness, varying from the tersest forms of epigrammatic incisiveness to the fullest majesty of patriotic or religious eloquence, would require far greater space to be rightly narrated than we can here afford. But so early as the middle of the thirteenth century, the every-day forms of letters of business and of familiar address, in no way varied from those of our own in any material degree. The family of the Bianchi of Siena possess, indeed, a literary treasure establishing this fact, a letter from a clerk in a bank to his chief, of the date 1260.¹

All the language of Tuscany and the learning of the world of that day passed by the crucible, however, of the fiery genius of her greatest poet, and to the general public in the "*Divina Commedia*," the work of Dante Alighieri, which embodies the literary as well as the historical aspect of the thirteenth century. Even the famous oration of Farinata degli Uberti, when he defended Florence "a viso aperto" from the malignant vengeance of his fellow Ghibellines, fails to convey to us, when reported, a spark of that power and fascination which the bold and manly act had over his contemporaries. The magnanimity and affectionate sympathy of the

¹ The writer of these pages saw, about twenty years ago, an immense folio "*Avicenna*," purchased at a sale; in this was a mark, which proved to be the letter of a little boy from Arezzo to his father, of the middle of the fifteenth century, 1466, written exactly as a child might write now.

"immortal Ghibelline" with the gentler races of civilization, could find no better mode of speech than a confused medley of homely proverbs. Hear the text of this great oration,—

"Come Asino sape,
Cosi Minuzza rape,
Si va Capra zoppa,
Se il Lupo non la 'intoppa."

To add to the homeliness of his speech, Farinata, whose mind was entirely absorbed by the impending catastrophe which threatened Florence, when asked the text of his discourse, made a blundering reply, saying it was,—

"Come Asino sape, si va Capra zoppa,
Cosi Minuzza rape, se Lupo non la 'intoppa."

Yet even the grotesque rudeness of the opening did not affect the force of the celebrated and successful appeal that saved the "nobile e gentile città" from utter and irrecoverable ruin.

Brunetto Latini, the master of Dante, was the first Tuscan who cultivated what may be termed literary or polite culture. His "Tesoro," which he claims to be the sum of all human knowledge, is compiled from the Bible, Aristotle, and Pliny. It was written in the French language, as that most widely understood and spoken by the class of readers our "man of much wisdom" (as Ricordano Malaspina terms him) "designed to benefit." Brunetto was also a citizen of decision, vigour, and influence. He is supposed to have had much part in the revolution of 1250, and in the formation of the "Primo Popolo," or Government of the "Anziani."

The "Tesoro," with an Italian translation, was first published by Buono Giamboni, in 1474, about one hundred and eighty years after the death of the author. Like his great disciple; he had composed his work in exile, having been banished after the Battle of Montaperti (A.D. 1260).

At last the silent ages found a voice to reveal to posterity all that they had nursed, and all that they had created; and not only did Dante Alighieri reveal the past, but he awoke in the breasts of his countrymen a thousand

slumbering chords of virtues, feelings, pathos, majesty, beauty, and patriotism, untouched for centuries, and which vibrate to the present day. We approach this great name with reverence as well as with admiration; he has become a household deity on our hearths, whilst retaining unaltered the ineffable dignity of humanity.

The "*Divina Commedia*" may thus be considered as the representation and embodiment of the thirteenth century. As St. Augustine gave us an epitome of "*Universal Christian History*," as seen from a purely Biblical aspect, according to the interpretation of his time, which, commented by P. Orosius, formed the basis of Orthodox Religious opinion so late as Bossuet; thus, Dante epitomised the moral, intellectual, and literary life of Italy, adorning the records of the past by episodes of a reality so startling and yet so coloured by Italian fire that, once read, they seem interwoven in the memory with the history of the country.

The keen observation of the varied aspects of nature, and the just and natural mode in which they fall briefly and incisively under analysis in his stanzas (without any of the measured frigidity of classical literature), form another point in common with our modern ideas, no less than his exalted conception of the grand moral loftiness and beauty of the female character, idealised in the ravishing figure of Beatrice, the unique fulfilment of all that genius and human tenderness combined ever inspired to any mortal pen.

But not alone as a poet and man of letters, as a politician and a scholar, was this greatest Tuscan known; his enlightened and comprehensive mind did not shrink with morbid sloth (as is too often the case with mere students) from the accurate and practical survey of the material world; nor from research into the phenomena of familiar and yet of important natural laws. The most noble and engrossing of these is certainly comprised in Astronomy; and disfigured as that elevating pursuit was by the fictive fancies of the East, it still remained, as we have abundant evidence to prove, in a state of advancement that

challenged the admiration and study of the highest order of intellects.

Francesco Stabili, better known as Cecco d'Ascoli, the venerable, contemplative and ill-fated sage of the day, was the master of Dante in astronomy. The lofty Tower of Cremona still stands a silent witness to the memory of this martyr to faction. From the summit of this favouring and singular tower he, aided by Eastern science, made his observations and calculations. In pursuance of the opinions of the times, he was greatly sought after to cast "nativities" and to draw "horoscopes." It may be here observed that these are by no means necessarily a wilfully fraudulent series of documents; later science has now exploded them, and they fall into the dominion of ridicule and of the vulgar. At all times, it is but too obvious, oracles were liable to abuse; but there were fixed and definite rules for determining nativities and for giving out oracles, and over these an honest and careful astrologer had no kind of power.

It happened, nevertheless, that the decisions of the planets, as delivered from the Tower of Cremona, were favourable to the Ghibelline lords of the Casentino and Umbria, and consequently were adverse to the Guelph interests of Florence. In strict accordance with the passions of the day, the government of the latter city, therefore, leagued with the ecclesiastical authorities to destroy the ill-fated astrologer. Up to that time, directly sanctioned by the Church, he had held the Chair of Astronomy, or, as it was then called, "astrology;" but he was now accused of "heresy," given up to the Inquisition, and condemned to be burnt alive for "the crime and practice of astrology;" that is, of "evil necromancy," as the crime they accused him of was then understood. With a final stroke of Guelph malice, we find Dante, who owed him so much, places him in "Hell."

Dante's celebrated allusion to the Southern Cross has exercised the subtlety of many commentators; the question, exhaustively treated by Dr. Barlow, has now been

finally set at rest ; the beauty of the allusion is equalled by its literal exactness :

“ Io mi volsi a man destra, e posi mente
All' altro polo, e vidi quattro stelle,
Non viste mai fuor ch' alla prima gente.”

Purgatorio, c. i. v. 22—5.

Three of these stars are beautifully visible to the naked eye, being of the first magnitude ; there is a fourth which is inferior, and a fifth still less brilliant. They blaze out in the darkness of the tropical sky with additional intensity, because the heavens around them are very barren of stars. Alexander von Humboldt says of them (“Cosmos,” vol. ii.):—“ In consequence of the precession of the equinoxes the starry heavens are perpetually changing their aspect from every portion of the earth's surface. The *early races of mankind*¹ beheld in the far north the glorious constellations of the southern hemisphere rise before them, and after remaining long invisible they will again appear in those latitudes after a lapse of thousands of years. The Southern Cross began to become visible, in 52°30' north latitude, two thousand nine hundred years before our era ; since, according to Galle, this constellation might previously have reached an altitude of more than 10°. When it disappeared from the horizon of the countries of the Baltic the Great Pyramid of Cheops had already been erected more than five hundred years.” The happy expression of “*la prima gente*” therefore applies, with scientific accuracy, to the “*early races of mankind*,” and not to a mere poetically vague “Adam and Eve,” as some commentators have incorrectly assumed.²

There are many other evidences of an attentive observation of the laws of nature in the “*Divina Commedia*,” and of a surprising correctness, if we consider the state of knowledge of the period.

In the *Inferno*, canto xi., v. 5, the natural repose or slumber of plants is alluded to.

¹ *La prima gente*.

² The name “Cross of the South” was given to these “*quattro luce sante*” in 1517 by Andrea Corsali, a Florentine astronomer.

In the *Purgatorio*, canto xxviii., v. 115–18, we find indicated the peculiarities of cryptogamous plants, and the mode of propagating them without seeds.

The theory of rain also is remarkable for truth and condensation. *Purgatorio*, canto v. 109 :—

“Ben sai come nell’ aer si raccoglie
Quell’ umido vapor che in acqua riede,
Tosto che sale dove ’l freddo il coglie.”

He divined the action of light on the ripening of fruit, the circumstances which influence the colouring of the foliage of plants, and the mysterious circulation of their vegetable juices. The reflections on the flight and migration of birds ; on the rainbow ; on the scintillations of the stars ; on the vapourous atmosphere created by combustion, are all equally accurate, and have been made the subject of a scientific memoir¹ in our own times. Many lines and passages might be quoted in a work more especially literary to prove, from the great work of Dante, how forcibly and exquisitely the beautiful horizons and the graceful nature of Tuscany had appealed to his poetic eye.

In his less popular and far less known “*Convito*,” we find he was acquainted with the works of Ptolemy and Aristotle, whom he sometimes corrects (by aid of the more advanced Arabian science). He gives an ingenious theory of the phenomenon of the Milky Way, and a correct one on the recurrence of eclipses. He was acquainted with the theory and practice of perspective, generally supposed unknown until the close of the fourteenth century ; in fact the “*Convito*” is the first philosophical treatise in the Italian language.

The dissertations of Dante upon the Italian vernacular are of the greatest interest. They prove not only that he had been gifted by nature with a copious and varied diction, but that he had devoted infinite pains and time to the study of that incomparable tongue, so inseparably connected with his name, and which, take it all in

¹ Targioni, “*Degli atti dell’ Accademia della Crusca*.” Vol. ii.

all, has never, since his own poem, been written again with majesty as exalted and pathos as profound. There are, however, far deeper and loftier topics treated in the "*Divina Commedia*," and these we have purposely reserved to the last.

We have already alluded, in the former chapters on Frederick II., to the great hold which free thought had already made on the Italian nation even during his reign, and to the many causes which brought this consequence inevitably about. Not only the obvious and public ones are to be studied, but others less known may be found in the "*Histoire Critique*" of Vincent de Beauvais and Brucker, vol. iii.

We have all before our eyes the naïf painting in the "*Belle Arti*," in Florence, of the "*Doctors of the Church*," and Averrhoës, and other "*heretics*" chained under the feet of these grim authorities of the Christian dispensation. Such a painting happily expresses precisely mediæval opinions of "*orthodoxy*."

Dante, who was afterwards censured in the same merciless manner by Rome for his honest denunciation of moral crimes, was in no way superior to the level of his day when "*heresy*" was in question; and as this subject leads to varied research and to extensive ramifications, we find, so long as eight hundred years ago, the germs already in vigour of all the principles on which modern society is based; deformed indeed by a fiery and a ferocious intolerance (from which it is the boast and the privilege of modern society to be free); but there is really very little absolutely new in our days, either in facts or in progress of human intellect, with regard to the laws that ought to govern man.

Dante himself was fully imbued with the most ardent belief in the transcendental virtues of the Roman Church (drawn from the Platonic doctrines and theories of the Alexandrine school). His burning, glowing ideal of what those virtues could effect (an ideal in no way too exalted, could it ever have been realised, and if the attendant corruption of irresponsible power had not marred the lofty

beauties of fervour and of faith) led him to be as completely intolerant of *dissent* as the most brutal and base of the "manigoldi" or executioners of the Inquisition.

When we come to reflect on the difference between Dante and Shakespeare in that point, we seem to have overleapt not three centuries, but as many as the precession of the equinoxes before mentioned has awarded to the disappearance of the Southern Cross.

By no other equally effective test can we bridge the abyss between the old and the new civilization of Europe. The hearty zeal and, so to speak, luxury of vengeance with which Dante deals with heretics, at a moment, too, when the massacres and tortures of Provence and of Upper Italy were fresh in the memory of his generation, is one of the most interesting phases of a mind otherwise tender and affectionate as it was elevated and patriotic. But as the Platonic ethics expounded by the doctors of the Roman Church have so widely and deeply influenced humanity, it will not be out of place to devote some moments to their more careful consideration.

It is now well known, by careful study of the relics of the Middle Ages, that Dante found the legends of Heaven, Hell, and Purgatory ready made and prepared for his finer taste by universal popular belief and favour. Sermon, legend, ballad, painting, sculpture, all told the same tale; but, by his boldest and loftiest flight of poetic genius, he at once invested these trivial and grotesque popular views and visions with an atmosphere of ennobling speculation, and images embodying sublime laws, wisdom, virtues, and beneficence.

All knowledge, science, art, history, poetry and philosophy he brings to embody those loftier aspirations of our being which are the home truths of the immortal soul. Dante, the original nature of whose soul is allowed to have been all that was excellent, fervently adopted the Platonic theory that the origin of all things is infinite goodness, a goodness inaccessible to base and ignoble passions, and which seeks to surround itself with perfect and noble works in harmony with itself.

The type of this perfection (he asserted) must pre-exist within the Great Artificer, and has been the guiding spirit or *prototype* of His thoughts since the beginning of time. Every artificer is influenced by the primeval type indwelling in his thoughts; his work is the result of his reason applied to the manufacture of some given object or purpose, which serves, like wax in the hand of the modeller, to render the form inspired by the master's mind in a tangible image under the master's hand.

The Divine mind communicates with the common mind through this Divine Prototype or Universal Idea. Ideas, varying in shape and in colouring, are therefore the *supreme reality*. Immaterial and immutable by their very nature, they enter into all the palpable shapes and forms of the created universe. By the side of this ideal perfection, which partakes of the incorruptible essence of supreme goodness, there is a necessary element of earth-born corruption, which Plato considers as brute or uncreated substance. This is why matter is utterly rebellious to the spirit, and involves it so often in the common imperfection of its unrighteous thrall.

The "supreme Reason," the cause and fountain of created essence, reveals its laws of intellectual light first, and more especially to men of higher genius, but partially and in lesser degree to all mankind.

Through this supreme guide, reason, the higher truths of science are sought after and defined. The other less noble element of our nature affords us merely the testimony of the senses, which is not to be relied on.

Dante has applied these theories to the inhabitants of his ideal world, where the "Blessed" and the "Lost" are both in their beatitude and torments alive to the presence of God, of an Immortal Being, by whom and through whom they were all created, and whose supremacy and justice are confessed by the outcast population of Hell, who feel the physical pangs of their eternal punishment aggravated by a sense of their loss of the presence of "goodness" and "virtue" for ever and for evermore.

The half of our earthly course is spent in the acquire-

ment of knowledge, the other half in its application; but the principal motor of all activity is Love. Love fills the universe with its présence, and presides over the harmony of its laws; but in man, of all created beings, the principle of love is most fully developed.

Love not only aspires to unity (more or less perfect) with the object of its affection, but it claims the realization of its noble ambition in works of art, in generous actions, in self sacrifice, in an unselfish devotion, that can only spring from a principle of virtue, seeking to realise itself in the created world; and through the beauty of its aspect we discern the difference between a pure and an impure love, and learn to discriminate clearly and without appeal between Evil and Good.

The sight of beauty, far from creating unholy desires, elevates the thoughts, for love is but a natural realization of the soul's thirst for higher truth and wisdom; it is the keynote of that harmony which is the music of the soul; through it we experience that divine ecstasy of enjoyment which accompanies the sudden revelation of any hidden truth after a diligent research—a pleasure pure, keen, and intellectual, but unspeakably high.

Whilst virtue is simple in essence it assumes, nevertheless, various types to suit human frailty of conception; but the highest of these are impersonations of the four qualities most important to the well-being of society—Prudence, Temperance, Strength, and Justice. All virtue implies the defeat of evil within us, and the will and the power to resist and to conquer the latter can only come from God.

In general, the natural desires of man are vague and undefined; he is mistily seeking for earthly things—riches, wealth, or glory. Conscious of a restless dissatisfaction, he is not awakened to a sense of a higher and unworldly felicity until brought to contemplate acts of virtue or works of scientific investigation.

God is consequently the beginning and the end of all things; the Source of Being, the Fountain of Will, the Treasure-house of the soul.

The soul can dimly feel conscious it once dwelt in a "happier state," in "His presence," face to face; to whom it will again return, after the purification of its sins in the prison bars of the flesh.

The brevity of human life, however, does not afford time for the accomplishment of the destiny of penance and purification of the soul. Hence the origin of the Platonic theory of the disenthralled spirit, released from this world, rising from "sphere to sphere," until it finally returns to the Source of Supreme Good.

According to Dante, the essence of God is recognised *à priori*, and from Him the material world is derived, by force of "creative will."

Supreme reason is set down as a guide to experience: the aspirations after a future world are to be the guiding light of our present existence. *Intuitive truths* are upheld as our highest standard of virtue, and supposed to supersede the logical or experimental truths which are derived merely from intellect or understanding.

In the nobleness of these speculations the Italian poet is the disciple of the Grecian sage; and yet, though capable of soaring into the regions of the highest thought, we find still the Aristotelian or scholastic teaching of the day but too apparent in the constructions of his poem; though it is but just to add that its immense and deep popularity, second only to that of the Bible, was chiefly owing to its being, if we may be permitted to use the expression, so perfectly and tangibly intelligible to his contemporaries.

The formal arrangement and symmetrical division of the other world exactly harmonized with what we have read, in another chapter, of the rectangular compartments of devotional Byzantine paintings; and there is likewise a tinge of the Oriental superstition attending certain numbers in his allotting "nine spheres" to Hell and "Purgatory," and also "nine" celestial ones to the reward of the heavenly virtues. The "tenth" is supposed to be the centre or Heaven, and of the visible presence of God.

We invariably find Hell the most popular and interesting, as well as amusing, in whatsoever popular representation, whether painting, legend, or poem, of the three great divisions of the unknown world. Humanity cannot imagine supreme bliss save in the uniform attitude of adoration; but the torments we can inflict on our fellow-creatures are infinite, and the subject exercises a positive fascination on the popular mind. There are certain features, it is true, common to almost all legends of hell; but the ingenuity and the rapture of man in heaping tortures on his brethren are quite a peculiar and suggestive feature in all, in the same way, and point out a common basis in all nations, and the universal brotherhood of the most widely distributed tribes.

To Dante alone the world is also indebted for a sublime vision of Heaven as a distinct whole, in which the various grades of celestial perfection are clearly revealed. To him the Platonic theory of the ascending soul was glorified and intensified by an image at once tender, truthful, lofty, and poetical, beyond the gentlest dreams of the Platonic visions. We allude, of course, to the lovely and glorious apotheosis of Beatrice, as the type of all that is holy, glorious, lofty, and yet endearing in the Christian Church. In another work¹ we have dwelt at greater length on this great theme. The more it is studied the better it explains the admiration it has commanded ever since it was first known to the world.

It is with reluctance that we must turn from this lovely figure, as we are at present more immediately devoting our attention to historical sketches, to consider the "*Divina Commedia*" in its graver aspects. We know the poet was exiled in the full vigour of his intellect, and ripe in experience—exiled, and for ever. We therefore are enabled to enter into and to comprehend his change of politics from Guelph—or paternal and municipal—to Ghibelline; in which last phase was created within him the ideal of a "supreme ruler," who should curb the hideous ferocity of the sanguinary

¹ "Dante, his Life and Times," 1865.

factions then bathing the streets of Italy with blood, and giving over to flame and pillage her exuberant harvests and her flowery valleys.

In magnanimity to an ungrateful country, Dante was unquestionably far inferior to the Grecian heroes he admired in theory so much ; we cannot lay to his charge the sweet weakness of forgiveness ; it is happy, perhaps, we cannot. A purely *ideal mind* never could have given us the “*Divina Commedia*.” To the bitterness of an insulted patriot, who held the jewel “purity” in his heart, we owe too many touches of nature, and too many eloquent and graphic passages for us to wish the author had been otherwise than human like ourselves.

We have before remarked that whilst Dante soared poetically, and in intellectual knowledge far beyond his age, yet in all that concerned the dealings between man and man, we do not see a shadow of any soft prophetic gleam of that future age of mercy which was to recognise the right of free thought, and of open, fair discussion. Savage and sanguinary was the code of the age and of the Church, and the genius of our great poet prompted no mercy to his opponents ; but it is unjust and untrue to call him a “traitor” because he ardently appealed to the high Henry of Luxembourg, the Ghibelline Lord of Italy, to allay the factions of Florence with a strong and equal hand. To the well-being of his native city he was most passionately attached to the latest hour of his existence, and when he expired, worn out with grief, at Ravenna, at an age relatively early, all surviving documents prove the sad, regretful thoughts of his “ungrateful Florence” which embittered his last days.

All the thirteenth century was represented in Dante Alighieri, and he was a shining light of the very best points of its “Guelphic civilization.” There, as in the United States of our own time, the first duties of a citizen were “labour” and “public service.” Idleness was proscribed and held in the highest disrepute ; even the severest intellectual study did not make it the less incumbent on the citizen to enrol himself in one of the

"corporations" or "arts." Dante, we remember, was enlisted amongst the Pharmacians, probably from some analogy to the interest he undoubtedly took in his earliest years in herbs and flowers.

From all time the chief distinction of the noble or Ghibelline class had been contempt for any occupation except war or the chase, and the convenient theory that "plunder" was the lawful mode of replenishing the aristocratic gypsire or purse. The difference was, therefore, broadly defined between the city and the country potentates. But the social feeling surpasses all other in Italy; men will undergo almost any physical privations for the mere sight of a town and congregation of their fellow-creatures. Again, the nobility either succeeded in forming petty but still real *courts* of their own, or else they passed under the caudine forks, and merged in the city population; the humiliation of changing both *arms and names* being wisely enforced.

The clergy had, from the foundation of Christianity, ever held a temporising and amalgamating place between the nobles and the plebeians; but between the two latter classes lay the unfathomable gulf of the *freeman* as contradistinguished to the *serf*. Nor must it ever be forgotten that, by the rights of war in these remote ages, prisoners were, if not butchered, publicly sold for slaves. The rise of a Guelphic and, therefore, free municipal population is not only intelligible, but seems a natural course of events, and its prosperity to be only limited by the mutual forbearance, integrity, and justice of those of whom it was composed.

The first wealthy popular citizens were emphatically termed the "*popolani grassi*." Records still survive, in many ancient small provincial towns, of the curiously homely rise and apparently obscure source of their wealth, the sheep and goats, cheese and skins of the (Tuscan) Casentino, the skins of foxes, and other wild creatures; above all, the contraband dealing in salt, and in tallow, or lard, formed the origin of great families. An interesting and, as far as is known, unique relic of the

literal meaning of the word *commonwealth*, is even now to be found in Italy. In the thirteenth century, families and "consorti" clubbed together *one common purse*, which, ably administered and frugally husbanded, tided over many a stormy day. In modern Italy, in like manner, all that is given to a poor person goes to the common stock; a custom, the good effects of which, though evident, are yet counterbalanced by the preying of the indolent and vicious on the honest gains of the self-denying and industrious. The thirteenth century beheld the foundation of many great Asylums and Hospitals for the relief of poverty and sickness, and for the lodging and refreshment of poor pilgrims.

It is well known that this form of charity has been exercised in the Levant on a vast scale, from the most remote times; the example of beneficence became popular in Europe, as increased freedom, commerce, piety, and enterprise awoke the sloth of barbarism from its slumbers. But so early as the year 898, we find the Hospital of La Scala already founded at Siena. The great hospital of Florence, called "Santa Maria Nuova," owed its development to the Portinari, the family of the Beatrice of Dante. Some dim notices exist of charitable refuges even earlier, and the Augustine monks had the honourable office of being appointed, as it were, the *managing committee* of all similar foundations.

One of the most curious domestic traits in Florentine civil history is the carrying out of the mediæval sumptuary laws in a city which existed chiefly by the arts of luxury—the fabrication of fine cloths, jewellery, gold and silver merceries, and so on.¹ Every now and then the fairer half of humanity would make an attempt at rebellion, and the earnestness of the appeal of the ladies of Florence to the wife of Walter of Brienne in the fourteenth century must be fresh in the memory of the readers of Villani; but, generally speaking, the sumptuary laws,

¹ The ladies of Florence remonstrated indignantly against the barbarous laws forbidding décolletée dresses.

more especially those concerning the table, were carried out rigorously in Florence.

We have extant the letter of a citizen of high repute and office, who chronicles the having seen the "foundation dug" of the Palazzo Strozzi, as he was coming from market with his little boy, and carrying the daily "spesa" of his household in a cloth—the "spesa," or provision, consisting of a fowl and a small portion of "lesso." The whole anecdote is exquisitely homely and graphic—the father and son pausing to peer down into the massive foundations, and the "spesa" under the citizen's cloak: we think we see them before us.

Ricobaldi tells us that whilst refinement and wealth were carried to extravagance and luxury at the Court of Frederick II., and amongst the nobles and clergy, the manners of the other Italians were very rude, and their fare spare and coarse. A man and wife eat from the same plate; they did not even use wooden trenchers; and two cups sufficed for a whole family. At supper the lights or torches were held by the children or slaves of the family, a practice that prevailed for many years later. Dress was then of the scantiest and most uncomely kind; until intercourse with the East brought in ample and flowing robes, men wore leathern or woollen cloaks, without fur or embroidery, and caps of a coarse woollen texture called *pignolato*, of which the women's scanty and only gowns were also made. Dante mentions with approbation (which his feminine readers cannot share) the virtuous wife of Bellincione Berti in a scanty green petticoat, fastened with a horn or bone buckle. People ate fresh meat three times a week at most, and all did not even drink wine in summer. Cellars were very rare; and, for obvious reasons, in those insecure days, granaries were very poor and few. If a man had happily a store of corn he generally buried it in a hole underground—many of which may yet be seen—from whence it was withdrawn unwholesome and musty.

As was universally the case in Europe during the Middle Ages, very coarse linen or hempen fabrics and

leather formed the staple wear of the masses. This might be seen until quite lately in remote districts of France, where the garment of essential use in covering the person of a woman was composed of the refuse of flax and hemp, coarse as sacking. Everything else, as petticoat, apron or kerchief, was a kind of accidental luxury. In Italy the women wore fine linen dresses called *Xoccone*. We have the beautiful female heads of Donatello to show us the style of head-gear of his day: it is not yet wholly extinct in the country. The higher orders in the thirteenth century bound temples and cheeks with broad bands, or ribbons; the hair, we perceive, sometimes fell at length, plaited, as in the beautiful female figure known as "*La Bella Peccatrice*" of Andrea Orgagna. But, indeed, the contemporary frescoes afford the richest and most authentic store of beautiful, varied, and picturesque costume; whilst they enable us to remark the justice of our poet's lamentations at the falling away of female simplicity from that Sabine matron, the heroine of the tight green skirt. The encouragement given to the elegant domestic arts, as we should now say, by the high orders of clergy caused St. Damiano, in his "reproof" to bishops and cardinals, to wax very wrath; he accuses them of having "beds sculptured at such prodigious cost, as to exceed the endowment of the most precious shrine, yea, of even the Apostolic altar itself.

"Even the simple grace of the royal purple dye is despised from its unity of tone, and the coverlets of their lofty couches are dyed with every colour. They despise home-made garments, and reject the coat of the sheep and the lamb; they must have costly furs, brought at extravagant prices from foreign countries—the ermine, sable, and marten."

After much more of the same, we come to a grave accusation of "defiling the Papal mitres by having them studded with precious gems and golden ornament."

"They have swift prancing coursers, whose spirited prancing paces and curved necks shake their riders as they

proceed in a curvetting line along the road. Nor must we forget the rings they proudly wear, in which are set large-sized pearls; nor the wands they hold, studded thickly with gems and gold. Forsooth! the blaze of gold and precious treasure that shone on the wands borne by the bishops Franensi and Esculano outvied the gorgeous splendours of the Pontifical staves."¹

St. Damiano proceeds: "Indian perfumes scent the lofty vases of these clerical gentry at their magnificent feasts.

"Numberless yellow wines are kept sealed in their crystal vessels."

He reproaches them bitterly with requiring to have their bed-chambers hung with beautiful and curiously wrought stuffs "wherever they travel in every direction." Yea, even to cover up the walls of the sacred edifices wherein they officiate, during the performance of funeral rites.

"They spread the seats with tapestry, storied over with all manner of strange pictures; and place rich curtains on the ceilings, lest any decayed part of it should fall. They have a crowd of attendants who stand around them, watching all their movements, and serving them reverently, standing at their beck and call, with the devotion of devotees."²

Saba Malespini, referring to the reception of Conradin in the Holy City, A.D. 1268, says: "A varied dress of

¹ Muratori. Ant. Ital. Dissert. xxiii.

² From the very earliest chronicles of the Christian Church, the wealth and luxurious habits of the hierarchy loudly scandalized the laity, and called forth the same bitter rebukes from the less worldly clergy, and from the sneering Pagans. But the monastic orders, when means and opportunities were supplied, rivalled the bishops. In the year 1149 there was an amusing dispute, happily preserved to us, between the canons of St. Ambrose, at Milan, and the monks of the same order, about the *bill of fare* to which they considered themselves entitled when they dined with the Abbot. The canons claimed the right of having nine different dishes of meat placed before them on the table, in three courses (portate), on these occasions. The first to consist of cold fowls, "gambas de vino," and cold pork. The second course was to be of fowls stuffed; beef with pepper, and "turtellam di Ravezzolo." In the third course, loins of meat, roast fowls, white bread, and small stuffed pigs, &c. &c.

different colours and of splendid materials was worn by the troops of attendants over the armour. Choirs of *female musicians*¹ performed in concerts within the city, on cymbals, drums, trumpets, violins, and every sort of musical instrument. Ropes were stretched across the street, so as to form arches from house to house, and decorated, not with laurel leaves and boughs, but with rare and beautiful drapery, and various furs, girdles, bracelets, fringes, strings of costly rings, diadems, buckles, clasps, necklaces of sparkling gems, silk bags, woven coverlets, linen fabrics, purple hangings, curtains, table-cloths, and fine linen, interwoven throughout with silk and gold; veils knotted together, and costly mantles, which skilful artificers, both foreign and native, had worked up, with rare skill, of the most precious materials."²

The accumulated wealth and splendour thus displayed at Rome in 1268 were but the natural consequence of her fame and long-honoured religious and political importance. Any Roman peasant had but to search his own soil, and he would find gems and ornaments. But the rapid increase of wealth in the new Municipalities was the fruit of domestic frugality, industry, and foreign commerce.

In 1191 Florence became a member of the Tuscan League. In 1201, or only ten years later, she concluded a treaty with the "Lords of the Mugello," a turbulent race of aristocratic robbers, who plundered without scruple the traders who passed near their haunts, "for the safe conduct of merchandise into Lombardy."

In 1281 a similar treaty was concluded with Genoa. In the following year treaties were signed with Prato and Pistoja, by which all tolls and duties on goods and persons were reciprocally renounced. Where the land was neither rich in quality nor wide in expanse, as around Florence, the people owed their aggrandisement

¹ Hence originated the custom of the old Masters of placing all those musical instruments in the hands of angels.

² Saba Malespini says: "Gilded" mantles; no doubt these were enriched with plates or spangles of gold. Apud. Muratori, Ant. Ital. Dissert. xxiii.

to keen faculties, persevering industry, and a certain natural aptitude for the technical superiority of workmanship. To these political and natural causes was added a deeply-rooted superstition of the people that Florence was predestined to fame, "because founded under the influence of *Aries*," and the superstition had, no doubt, the admirable effect of urging on to the highest perfection the woollen fabrics which formed the basis of the prosperity of the Republic. The *Arte della Lana* is inseparably interwoven in every picturesque or historical detail of Florence; its image recurs perpetually, and "*Aries*" really did "push with his horn," as in the book of Daniel; and he was the earthly source of the city's fame. Whilst all Italian cities have been distinguished by a devotion to lawful commerce and foreign enterprise, which made them great benefactors to humanity, the Florentine merchants rose in intellectual capacity far above those of the sister cities, by a mere spontaneous gift of nature. We find them generally in the ranks of knighthood, and admitted on equal terms as envoys and ambassadors in the Courts of the greatest sovereigns. The familiar instance of the nine ambassadors, all Florentines, from different kings, will recur to the reader, as occurring in the Court of Boniface VIII.

All the documents detailing the organisation of the celebrated *Arti*, or Guilds, are, fortunately, preserved to us. In 1204, we find the importance of the "Consuls of the Arts;" and the silk and wool trades are put down separately. In the year 1314, "*Uguccione della Faggiola*," the powerful Ghibelline lord of the Upper Tiber (where the country is still full of traditions of him), took and sacked the city of Lucca; until then the sole possessor of the art of breeding the silkworm, of preparing, weaving, and dyeing the thread: and though the Lucchese fugitives could not bring into Florence their crystal springs (the purity of which is believed to have caused the excellence of their dyes), they brought with them, on that occasion, their delicate and remunerative art, to enrich the Tuscan City.

The fraternity of the "Umiliati" were the great teachers and improvers of the art of weaving wool. These were originally the Italian refugees from the Lombard cities, worsted in their fights with Henry I. In 1014 they were driven across the Alps in great numbers; there, with that fine spirit of self-respect, for which the Lombards have always been honourably remarkable, they, instead of sinking into slavery, sloth, and mendicity, associated together for the promotion of the wool and cloth trade. Readmitted to Italy in 1140, they became a religious body, under the rule of a president, or *Mercatore*; and we find them as teachers and governors of this valuable art all over Italy. The integrity, no less than the skill, of the Frati Umiliati caused them to be considered with great respect; and to them the guardianship of the treasuries of cities was generally confided. They acquired lawfully vast wealth, and from their prudence, ability, and scrupulous justice, and great influence at Cremona (which was then a vast and wealthy entrepôt of commerce) they presided over the "weights and measures."

With the enlightened generosity of superior minds, instead of repelling, they secured the aid of all good artists by generous allowances; and thus all the improvement that science and skill could devise were secured to their use. They were attached to armies as commissaries, and were the treasurers of the Commonwealth of Florence. Preachers, poets, authors, and artists were enrolled in the ranks of these benefactors of the human race. Their first settlement in Florence was at San Donato, close to the city, but in 1259 they moved close to the Arno (no doubt for the better convenience of their trade); they built, and dwelt in, the convent of Santa Caterina d'Ognisanti.

Documents attest the singular fact that, even at that early time, the city of Florence had agents in England to purchase and forward the wools of that island to be manufactured in Italy; the coarse, ill-grained wrought fabrics from abroad were likewise imported, prepared, dyed, improved, and sold again at vast profits.

The Corporation of Dyers was under strict supervision, and great care taken to prevent frauds, which would have reacted injuriously on the reputation of the cloth merchants.

The silk trade, though officially admitted as an art in 1204, was for upwards of a century essentially a foreign branch of commerce, as Greece alone of all European countries could rear the silkworm. The art of silk weaving and embroidery had been, we recollect, introduced into Sicily by King Roger II., 1147;¹ it is possible it may have been not wholly unknown in Genoa, but it came to Tuscany from Sicily.

Of all professions, however, preeminent stood that of banker in Florence. The peculiar combination of intellectual grasp and cultivation of detail, we have so often noticed in the Florentines, fitted them exactly for a profession demanding at once sagacity in conception and accuracy in the most trifling particulars. We find Florentines entrusted with the affairs of popes, cardinals, and potentates of all ranks, whose mints and revenues they controlled and directed at will. The Florentines undertook the farming of the Papal revenues during the absence of the popes at Avignon, for the Mozzi and Spini were the accredited agents of Gregory X. and Boniface VIII.; and we find Bardi employed in the English treasury, as well as other Italians, about the same date. The wealth and influence of these Florentine banking firms was very great. We can hardly realise it at this distance of time, but we point out one firm, the "*Carroccio degli Alberti*," who had branch establishments at Avignon, Bruges, Brussels, Paris, Rome, Naples, Venice, Perugia, Siena and Barletta.²

Besides these great public firms, which ranked with public institutions, the trade of money-lending was

¹ King Roger II. was as skilful a legislator as successful a soldier; he excluded, by express clause, the silk weavers he had captured in Corfu, Cephalonia, Corinth, Thebes, Athens, &c., from the restitution of prisoners after the conclusion of peace, and settled them in the royal palace precincts at Palermo.

² Muratori, *Ant. Ital. Dissert.* xii.

carried on throughout Europe by numberless Italians, under the names of Tavolieri, Usurai Toscani, Lombardi, Cambiatori, Prestatori, Banchieri and Feneratori. We need not remind our readers that the lucrative trade of gems and the precious metals was combined with banking, properly so called; and that pledges in the most valuable property, spices, jewellery, stuffs, and plate were deposited as securities, and often became the property of the banker, forming another source of vast wealth to him. They were universally feared and disliked as hard and exacting: but these are the reproaches heaped at all times on the possessors of money by the needy. We read of a singular pledge, however, exacted from the Marchese Aldobrandini d'Este. He required money from the Florentine bankers to support the cause of Innocent III., and he was compelled, besides pawning his allodial domains, to put in his *brother* as hostage and pledge for his debt.

The laws of Justinian, more just than those that succeeded them, allowed from four to twelve per cent. interest on money. But the rate increased very much subsequently, for we find twenty per cent. per annum often given. In 1336 the Florentine Government paid first twelve and then twenty per cent. for money. This was the ordinary rate of interest between private individuals until 1430, when Jews were invited to establish money-lending houses in Florence, "to check the rapacity of Christian merchants," and the condition made with the Hebrews was that their demands should not exceed twenty per cent. interest.

The art of banking, which, as we see, included much traffic in the precious metals and stones, wool, silk, and goldsmith's work, properly so called, was the most conspicuous in Florence; but the trade of spices and drugs was also a profitable one, though Venice, curiously enough, always far outshone her sister city in these. The unexpected art of the furrier is also specified with respect in the enumerating of the city's guilds. We possess a list of the furs of twenty-two foreign animals,

habitually imported, chiefly from Northern Asia. The Florentines, excluded by the naval power and rivalry of Venice, from Egypt and the Levant, had succeeded in rounding their foes by way of Astracan, had penetrated as far as China, and, in the fourteenth century, had a factory and trade in Pekin, which they called *Gambalecco*. On entering the dominions of the Emperor of China all their specie was taken from them, and a corresponding value in paper money, called *Babisci*, was delivered to them. This paper money, of a yellow colour, the Government tint in China, was stamped of three different values.¹

The Florentines were always careful of the purity and beauty of their famous gold florin. It was first coined in the thirteenth century, but the Augustali and other gold coins struck at Pisa, Genoa, Lucca, and other privileged cities, in the name of Frederick II., were always accepted throughout Italy.

The golden florin of Florence was the declaration of Republican and Guelph triumph. The coining of any money, however trivial, was, indeed, the peculiar mark in Italy of conquest. The custom is not extinct even now, but in the thirteenth century the galling and insolent triumph of "coining money," under an enemy's walls, in his lands, is often recorded. The coining of the gold florin had, therefore, a far deeper significance than might at first appear; it was, in fact, the type of an entirely new epoch, and, irrespective of its intrinsic beauty, this coin must always be associated with a public interest no other piece of mere money can boast of.

The "Primo Popolo," in the year 1252, stamped for the first time on its own authority, a gold coin with the image of the Tutelar Saint, St. John the Baptist (San Giovanni Battista), and on the other side the "Lily," which was and is the symbol of the people's Municipal power. The florin was of one drachm, or seventy grains of fine

¹ See Pagnini, *Della Decima*, or Malaspini, Chap. i. p. 11, on this very interesting subject. Francesco Balducci, in his *Memoirs of Trade*, gives the entire route of the adventurous Florentine traders between Val d'Arno and China; he also enters into many important details on their imports and exports.

gold of twenty-four carats. It has hardly ever been altered. A new silver florin was also coined in 1252, and another, of somewhat more value in 1282. These were merely called florins.

To these was added the *soldo grosso*, of less value than either. In 1305 came the *grossi popolani*, and in 1314 the *guelfi del fiore*, with the half and the quarter.¹

We have thus endeavoured to point out a few of the leading branches, and to dwell on the peculiar qualities of trades and of the people, that made Florence so famous.

The purely indigenous "revival" of commerce (on a grand scale), of science, letters, and arts, began in Italy in the thirteenth century. At no subsequent period can we fix our attention on so spontaneous an outburst of every faculty that ennobles, dignifies, adorns, or consoles and blesses humanity. We desire to impress upon the reader that this was the unquestioned effect of Guelphic civilization; under which every man had opportunities for the exercise of all his faculties, not by favour, by caprice, or by the direct influence of wealth; but in virtue of his being a *free citizen*. And though unhappily, the blind passions of man raged in Municipalities as recklessly as in despotic Courts, yet the former afforded to individual character a definite and noble aim in life, which was calculated to ennoble its peaceful hours, and even to soften the rancour of private and factious animosities. The great work of Dante (which must ever be our final reference in dwelling on an age of which he was the august embodiment) affords glimpses, in his own feelings, of a relenting justice, even to his most bitter foes. We may consider the "*Divina Commedia*" as the second great Bible of Humanity; its pages and precepts seem as if addressed to us but a few years ago, and so long as the world exists it will be searched for lessons of virtue, of tenderness, of fidelity, and of faith.

It has been our pleasing duty, our task of overwhelm-

¹ Pignotti, *Storia Fiorentina*, Vol. ii., p. 78.

ing interest, to narrate the outlines of Italy's story until the great Revival of Europe. We may be pardoned if we call attention finally to the significant phrase of Boniface VIII., who termed the Florentines the "Fifth Element" of Nature. May the unspeakable blessings of union and of freedom lead the peoples of this fair Nation now to cultivate the immortal lessons taught to the World at large by their greatest writers; and may this gifted and lovely land rise once more in moral and political rectitude, faith and valour, to become again the "Fifth Element" in a more universal sphere of greatness, progress, and utility!

APPENDIX.

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Note to page 499.

PULPIT OF NICOLA PISANO, IN THE BAPTISTERY OF PISA, A.D., 1260, copied from Crowe and Cavalcaselle, "New History of Painting in Italy, from the Eleventh to the Sixteenth Centuries." *Murray.*

"Nicola chiselled his figures in the highest possible relief, detached them completely, and followed the old Roman system of sculpture. He polished the marble with most praiseworthy care; with the drill he cut the corners of the mouths, the pupils of the eyes, the nostrils and ears, and stopped the perforations with black paste. The hair and ornaments he *gilt*, and traces of the gold are still in parts visible. Of Christian sentiment not a trace."

For the convenience of readers who may not have this celebrated Pulpit present to the memory we add a description of it.

"This remarkable monument is erected in the form of a hexagon, resting on nine pillars; the central one rests on the shoulders of a man, a griffin, and group of animals quaintly arranged. Three rest on lions, a lioness and her cubs; three on simple pediments, and two support the steps. A trefoil arch spans the space between each of the six principal pillars and pilasters, starting from the capitals, regulating the ornamental corner of the Pulpit. In front of each of these pilasters stood a statue symbolizing one of the virtues.

Fortitude.—A juvenile Hercules, with a lion's cub on his right shoulder, and his left hand on the mouth of a slain lion.

Fidelity.—A female figure, holding in her arms a dog.

Charity.—A woman with an infant."

Of other figures the emblematic meaning was less apparent. "For instance, at the angle near the steps an angel was represented sitting on a lion, with a deer in its teeth. In one hand he bore the stump of a sceptre; in the other a small bas-relief of the Crucifixion; possibly this was intended for the symbol of Faith. In the births of the arches four evangelists and six prophets are ingeniously placed. Seven triple columns supported the parapet of the Pulpit, and framed five bassi-rilievi representing the birth of the Saviour, the adoration of the Wise Men, the Presentation in the Temple, the Crucifixion, and the Last Judgment."—Crowe and Cavalcaselle, Vol i., chap. iv., p. 123.

Note to page 500.

"ARCA DI SAN DOMENICO," by Nicola Pisano, Bologna, copied from Lord Lyndsay's "Christian Art," Vol. ii., p. 109.

There are six large bas-reliefs delineating the principal events in the life of St. Dominic, disposed, two in front, one at each extremity, and two behind.

To the front is fixed a small statue of the Virgin, crowned, and holding the infant Jesus. A small statue of our Saviour occupies the corresponding position at the back of the arca. The four doctors of the Church are sculptured at the angles. The series of subjects commences at the back from the left, runs round, and terminates in the right basso-relievo. The subjects are as follows:—

I.—THE PAPAL CONFIRMATION OF THE RULE OF THE DOMINICAN ORDER.

St. Dominic, a Spaniard of the illustrious Gothic House of Guzman, having organised the scheme of a new religious brotherhood, devoted to the defence of the Faith against heresy, demanded the Pope's sanction for the same, but unsuccessfully. The following night, however, the Pontiff beheld in a dream the Church of the Lateran giving way, and the Saint stopping it with his shoulders; the warning was obvious, and the confirmation of St. Dominic's order quickly followed.

II.—BASSO-RELIEVO.

The Apostles Peter and Paul appear to St. Dominic while praying in St. Peter's. St. Peter presents him with a staff, St. Paul with a book, bidding him go forth and preach to Christendom. To the right, St. Dominic is seen sending forth the friars of his order ("fratres predictatores") on their mission to mankind.

III.—BASSO-RELIEVO.

St. Dominic is seen praying for the restoration to life of the young Napoleon, nephew of the Cardinal Stefano, who had been thrown from his horse and killed, as seen in the foreground; his mother kneels behind in fervent prayer. Horse excellent; figures natural.

IV.—BASSO-RELIEVO. ST. DOMINIC'S DOCTRINE TESTED BY FIRE.

St. Dominic, after preaching against the Albigenes, had written out his argument, and delivered it to one of his antagonists, who, showing it to one of his companions as they stood round the fire, they determined to submit it to that test. The scroll thrice thrown in, thrice leaped out unhurt.

V.—BASSO-RELIEVO. THE MIRACLE OF THE LOAVES.

Forty of the brethren having assembled one day for dinner, found nothing was producible from the buttery, save a single loaf

of bread. St. Dominic was about to divide it amongst them, when two beautiful youths entered the refectory with baskets full of loaves, which they distributed to the fraternity, and afterwards they disappeared. The legend is greatly simplified; the forty monks are reduced to six, the angels pour the loaves, represented as sacramental wafers bearing the Cross, into the lap of St. Dominic, who distributes them to his brethren. Composition simple; fine types.

VI.—BASSO-RELIEVO. THE PROFESSION OF THE YOUTHFUL DEACON REGINALD.

Reginald fell suddenly ill when on the eve of entering the order, and his life was despaired of. St. Dominic interceded for him with the Virgin, who appeared to him on the following night, when on the point of death, accompanied by two beautiful maidens; anointed him with a salve of marvellous virtue, murmured to him words of mystery and power, and showed him, at the same moment, a pattern of the Dominican robe, as she desired it thenceforth to be worn (varied from the fashion previously in use). Three days afterwards Reginald, as she had foretold, received this novel habit from the hands of the Saint, in perfect health.

All the incidents of this tale are rendered with grace, beauty, and originality of design. In the execution of this great work, Nicola Pisano had found himself under the necessity of creating the whole of the serial compositions above referred to, of animating them with a semblance of life and beauty corresponding to the requirements of the subject to be represented.

The subjects themselves had never before been treated; hence the artist was forced to quit the leading strings of the Byzantine school, and leap at once into the area of free art.

Note to page 504.

ALLEGORICAL PAINTINGS OF GIOTTO AT ASSISI—CHASTITY—OBEDIENCE—POVERTY, from Lord Lyndsay's "Christian Art," p. 223, letter iv., vol. ii.

The four large and beautiful compositions, which adorn the groined vault that bends over the tomb of St. Francis in the lower church, have probably been suggested by a vision recorded by St. Buonaventura. "Journeying to Siena, in a broad plain between Campiglia and St. Quirico, St. Francis was met by three maidens in poor raiment, and exactly resembling each other in age and in appearance. The brethren of St. Francis concluded that this apparition imported some mystery pertaining to the Saint, and that the three poor maidens signified Chastity, Obedience, and Poverty: the beauty and

sum of evangelical perfection, all of which shone with equal and consummate lustre in the Man of God, although he preferred to glory in the privilege of poverty."

The first, or northern compartment, inscribed in Gothic letters, "*Sancta Castitas.*"

From the centre of a fortress, situated on a rock, defended by battlements and palisades, rises a high tower, within which appears at a window a young maiden praying, while two angels floating in the air present to her, the one a palm branch, the other a book, probably the Bible (the maiden is, of course, Chastity). In the foreground, outside, and in front of the fortress, is represented the rite of Christian baptism. A youth is half immersed in the font; the angel Purity pours the water on his head; Fortitude dries him, a third holds his garments, a fourth leaning over the palisades offers him, from within the fortress, the banner of the Cross.

On either side of this group, as if ready to defend the castle against a world in arms, stands a warrior, with hand on sword, and shield on arm. One of the shields bears as devise a royal, the other an imperial crown, from whence it is inferred that these personages are designed to represent the Emperor St. Henry, and Boleslaus, King of Poland, both of whom are said to have united virginity with marriage.

In the angle to the left St. Francis welcomes three men who ascend the hill, ambitious of leading the angelical life. In that to the right, Penance, winged, but in an anchorite's robe, and accompanied by various figures armed with scourge, staff, and cross, drives the World, the Flesh, and the Devil, down the precipice of Hell. Satan, falling backwards, is just disappearing. Cupid, a lean scarecrow, with bow, quiver, and fillet, and feet ending in claws, looks ruefully round as he is pushed down the declivity; and the "World," in the shape of a skeleton, more in the background, is about to follow. The second of these evangelical virtues is allegorized in the compartment opposite to the preceding one.

SANCTA OBEDIENTIA.

Under the columned loggia, or porch of a church, and in front of the crucifix, Obedience, represented by an angel robed in black, and placing the finger of his left hand on his mouth, passes the yoke over the head of a Franciscan monk kneeling at his feet, who also assists in the operation; two others accompany him, to whom an angel seems to say, "Follow his example!"

Obedience is supported on his right hand by Prudence, on his left by Humility. Angels kneel to the right and left, one of whom, to the right, appears to repulse a Centaur standing without the porch, whose hind feet, ending in claws, betray Satan under his character of Pride.

On the roof of the loggia, attended to the right and left by two kneeling angels, stands, in his monastic robe, St. Francis, above

whose head the two Hands of the Deity appear from heaven, dropping, apparently, the knotted cord of the Franciscans.

The loftiest and noblest Christian virtue, far transcending even Chastity or Obedience, the crown of glory of St. Francis, is

SANCTA PAUPERTAS,

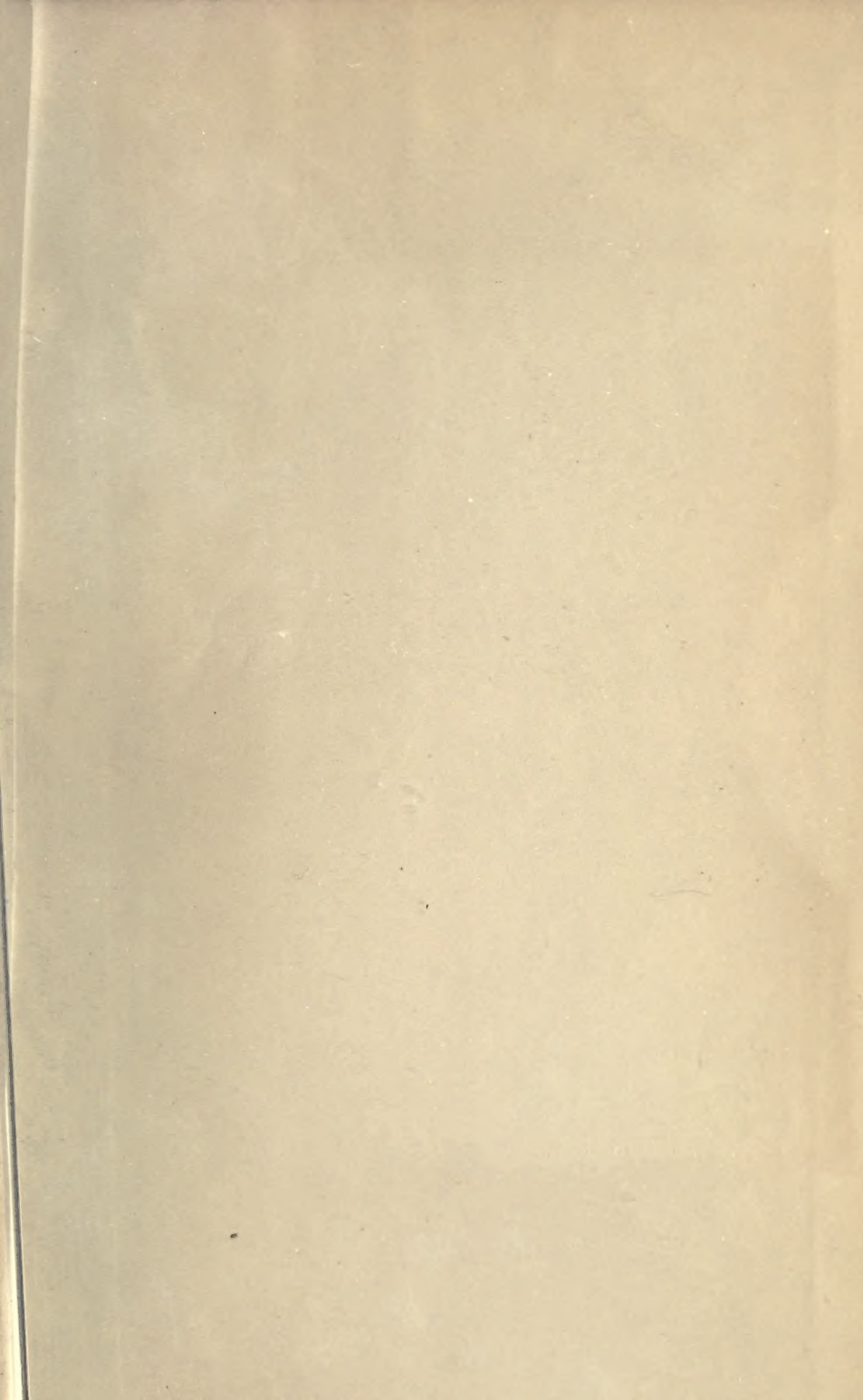
the Lady Poverty of his spiritual chivalry, to whom he is represented as married by Christ.

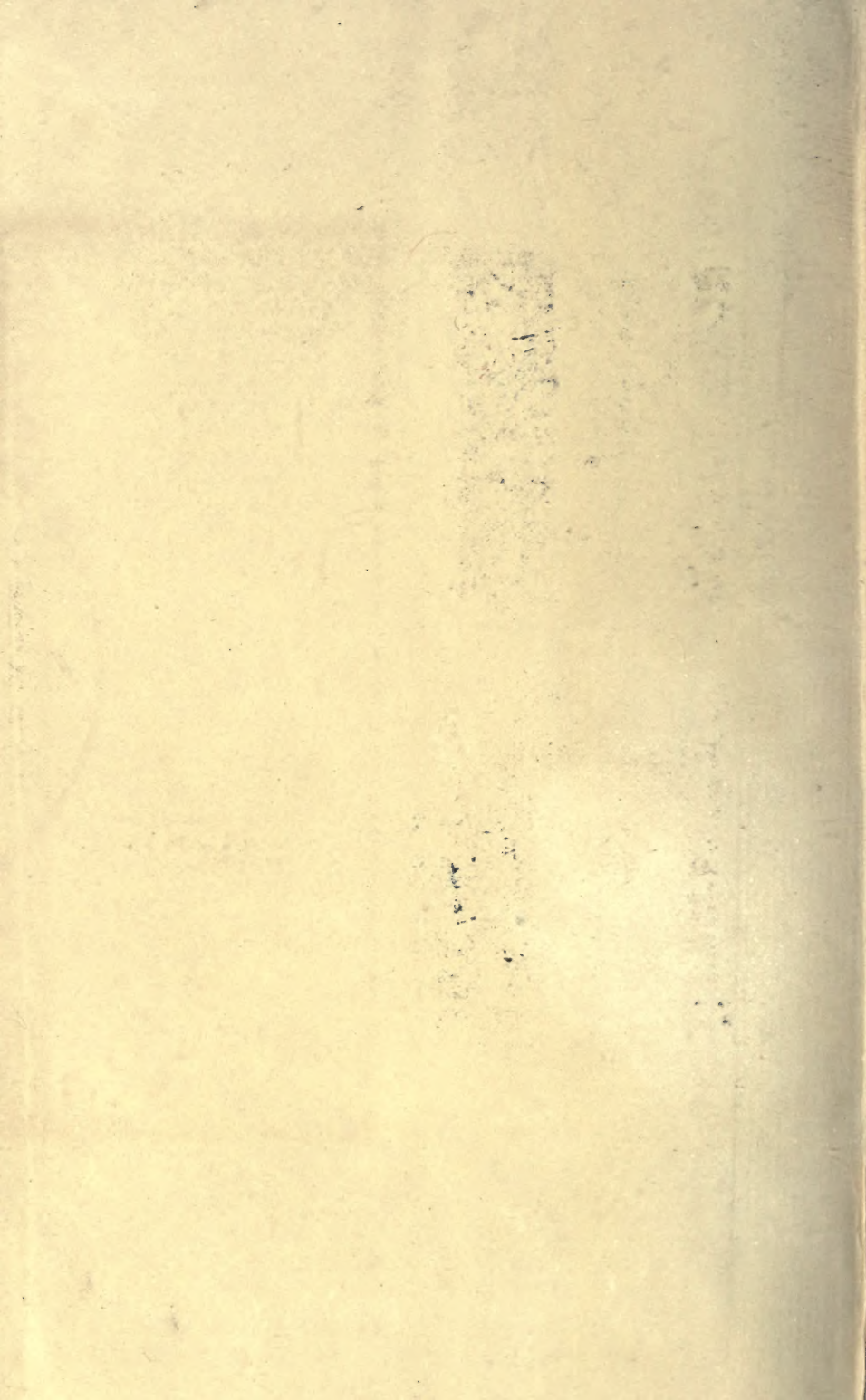
The scene is a rocky wilderness. Poverty stands in the midst, emaciated, barefooted, in a tattered robe, her feet among thorns, which a youth is thrusting against her with a staff, while another throws stones, and a dog barks at her. She is attended by Hope and Charity as bride-maidens. Herself being thus substituted for Faith, St. Francis places the ring on her finger, while our Saviour standing between them at once gives away the bride and bestows the nuptial benediction. Angels and other figures attend to the right and left. In the left corner, at the bottom of the fresco, St. Francis is represented in youth giving his robe to the poor officer; and, at the opposite extremity, three men in rich robes, one holding a purse, the other a falcon, represent probably the secular benefactors of the order. In the sky, at the top of the composition, and in reference to the corners thus referred to, the Deity bends from heaven, and two angels present to Him, the one the robe St. Francis had given the officer, the other the model of a church or convent, probably this of Assisi, with a star shining over it. Finally, turning towards the east, is discerned the union, concentration, reward, and recompense of the three evangelical virtues, in the triumph or apotheosis of the hero of this history, the *Gloriosus Franciscus*.

He is seated in a triumphal chair, holding the cross in one hand and a roll or book in the other, probably the rule of his order, and surrounded by angels, who celebrate his praises with trump and song; while above his head is suspended from heaven a shield or banner, on which is depicted a cross surrounded by seven small cross-lets or stars, representing, perhaps, "the seven Spirits of God." Apparently the whole *cortège* is ascending to heaven.

THE END.







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